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REPORT

OF THE

SPECIAL COMMISSION

ON THE

HOURS OF LABOR,

AND THE

CONDITION AND PROSPECTS OF THE INDUSTRIAL CLASSES.

FEBRUARY, 1866.

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Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

State House, Boston, Feb. 7, 1866.

To the Honorable Senate and House of Representatives in General Court assembled.

The Commission appointed by His Excellency Governor Andrew, in accordance with a Resolve of the last legislature, "to collect information and statistics in regard to the Hours of Labor, the condition and prospects of the industrial classes, with such other information as they may deem proper, and report the result of such investigations to the next legislature for its action," respectfully submit the following

REPORT:

Wishing to gain information from all parts of the State concerning the subject intrusted to us, we issued early in October a thousand printed circulars, sending one or more to every town in the Commonwealth, making such inquiries concerning the general subject as would facilitate our investigations. A few weeks later we sent another edition of the circular to such persons and places as seemed to us most likely to furnish us with the needed information.

In response we have received about eighty letters. An abstract of these we have thought proper to present in tabular form, in the Appendix, together with a brief summary of such letters as contained no statistical information, but treated only of the general subject.

It will be seen by these tables that only thirty-nine out of the 334 towns of the State have been heard from, and that three

whole counties, Dukes, Franklin and Nantucket, have given no response to our circulars.

Our first hearing was held October 26th, and was continued, by successive adjournments, through eight sessions of from three to five and a half hours each, closing November 30th. A full report of the hearings, taken mainly by a phonographer employed for the purpose, we tender to your honorable body for preservation or publication, as you may think best, premising that these manuscript reports contain thoughts on both sides of the question at issue worthy of being printed for present reading and future reference.

The most of our sessions were held in the evening to accommodate the workingmen. The attendance was not so large as might reasonably have been expected from the general interest in the subject supposed to be felt by the workingmen of the State. This, however, was accounted for on the ground that many who were there, represented, as officers of various associations, large numbers who could not conveniently attend. Fourteen different trades, or branches of industry, were represented at these hearings. A few others have been heard from by letter, but they all together represent quite inadequately the industrial interests of the Commonwealth, indicating that the public interest in the general subject is, at present, rather expectant than profound. We name this simply as a fact, not as bearing at all upon the merits or demerits of the questions beginning to agitate the public mind.

In these hearings, as in our circulars, we have sought especially for reliable *statistics* rather than individual opinion. But we have found that statistics are not easily obtained, and we have much less to report in this direction than is demanded by the importance of the great questions involved.

The most marked and inexcusable evil that has been brought before the Commission, and one that appeals legitimately to the legislature for redress, is the condition of many of

The Children in Manufacturing Districts.

Therefore, before entering upon the question of the "hours of labor" for adults, we ask your attention to some facts which have been elicited concerning the condition of children, claiming, as we think, your serious consideration.

The law of the State (chapter 42 of the General Statutes,) is as follows:—

"SECT. 1. Children of the age of twelve years, and under the age of fifteen years, who have resided in the State for the term of six months, shall not be employed in a manufacturing establishment, unless, within twelve months next preceding the term of such employment, they have attended some public or private day school, under teachers approved by the school committee of the place in which said school was kept, at least one term of eleven weeks, and unless they shall attend such school for a like period during each twelve months of such employment. Children under twelve years of age, having resided in this Commonwealth for a like period, shall not be so employed unless they have attended a like school for the term of eighteen weeks within twelve months next preceding their employment, and a like term during each twelve months of such employment.

"SECT. 3. No child under the age of twelve years shall be employed in any manufacturing establishment more than *ten* hours in one day, and the owner, agent or superintendent who knowingly employs such child for a greater number of hours shall forfeit the sum of fifty dollars for each offence, for the use of the person prosecuting therefor."

VIOLATION OF THE LAW.

A saddening amount of testimony, by letter and at the hearings, has been brought before the Commission, concerning the frequent and gross violation of this law. We by no means suppose this violation to be universal. We have had cheering testimony from Lowell, in particular, of the faithful observance of the law in that city, and the high regard in which it is held. There may be other places from which we have not heard, where the statute is strictly obeyed. We present such testimony as we have received.

Erastus Maltby, Esq., of Taunton writes: "I do not think the law of the State, in regard to the working of children in factories, and attending school, is fully and faithfully obeyed in this city."

Henry Jennings, Esq., of New Bedford, writes: "There is a considerable number of cases of children kept away from school. They are employed in almost all kinds of labor. Some girls have been employed as young as seven. One man who has I believe, three sons, aged respectively, eight, ten and twelve, told a

gentleman of our city who asked him if it did not go hard with so young a child to rise so early in the morning, 'that it was a very hard thing for the little fellow at the beginning, but that he had got more used to it now, and stood it pretty well.'"

A letter from Sudbury states that at the factory in Assabet, partly in that town, eleven hours are required, and that children are at work there who should be at school.

Charles Durfee, Esq., of Fall River, writes: "Quite a number of children and youth are employed in the common operations of manufacturing. To a limited extent they are kept from school by their parents."

Another letter from Fall River, stated the case more strongly. It says "there are 652 children, of both sexes, from eight to fourteen, working in the mills, most of them unable to read or write, all kept from school. A great number of the *adults* are unable to write their name."

Similar testimony came before the Commission at the hearings. Robert Bowers of Lawrence stated, "there is a great number of children from twelve to fifteen years, who work at night. The majority of those who do night work are under eighteen years of age. The statute prohibiting the employment of children under twelve years of age, is constantly violated in the Lawrence mills."

The following is the

Testimony of T. J. Kidd, of Fall River.

Question. Did you know that there was a statute against the employment of such children?

Answer. There has been some talk about it. Only among a few working men.

Q. You have a school committee. Have you ever made any representations to them?

A. Don't suppose a word was ever said to them about it.

Q. Was there ever any one who tried to cause the children to be sent to school?

A. Not since the old man Robeson died.

Q. Why do not the parents send them to school?

A. Small help is scarce; a great deal of the machinery has been stopped for want of small help, so the overseers have been going round to draw the small children from the schools into the mills; the same as a draft in the army.

Q. Do I understand that agents go about to take children out of the schools, and put them into the mills?

A. They go round to the parents and canvass them. This produces nothing but misery and crime. I have looked into it more the last year than before. The boys and girls are all mixed together, from seven years up to thirteen, and are entirely demoralized. One demoralizes another. They get so that they don't care for their employers or their parents. The next thing they say is, "I won't work." I can go round the streets of Fall River in the night, and pick up boys who are staying away from home, and who won't work because they are so demoralized. It all comes from their not having schooling. You can attribute it to no other cause.

The Testimony of John Wild, also from Fall River.

I don't know as I have any more to say, except that I have two little boys, one eleven and the other about eight and a half. I am no scholar myself, because I have always been working in the mill, and I am sorry for it. I don't want my children to be brought up in the same way. I wish to get them to work a little less hours, so that I can send them to night school. I want, if it is possible, to get a law so that they can go to school, and know how to read and write their names.

Q. Do they work in the mill?

A. I have been forced to send them in. My earnings would not keep the door open. I had to send them in to help me earn a living. They are getting pretty big, and they want a deal of clothing, and I could not get it out of my earnings. I wish to get shorter hours. I am willing to lose the extra hours for the good of my children.

Q. Do the children work by the day?

A. By the day.

Q. How old are the children?

A. Seven and eight.

Q. Have you a child of seven working in the mill?

A. Yes, I have.

Q. You have only two children working in the mill?

A. Only two.

Q. What wages do these children get?

A. $2.30 per week, the smallest one.

Q. Does the other get the same?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. How long has the youngest worked in a mill?

A. About five or six months.

Q. Had he been kept in school up to that time?

A. Yes, sir, but he didn't learn much—not so much as I'd like to have him.

Q. Does he get any schooling now?

A. When he gets done in the mill, he is ready to go to bed? He has to be in the mill ten minutes before we start up, to wind spindles. Then he starts about his own work, and keeps on till dinner time. Then he goes home, starts again at one, and works till *seven*. When he's done, he is tired enough to go to bed. Some days he has to clean and help scour during the dinner hour. We used to scour all dinner hour, but we stopped that some little time ago. It takes us till about half past twelve; some days, all the time. Some days he has to clean spindles. Saturday he's in all day.

Q. Is there any limit on the part of the employers as to the age when they take children?

A. They'll take them at any age when they can get them, if they are old enough to stand.

Q. How young are the youngest?

A. I guess the youngest is about seven. There are some that's younger, but very little.

Q. Do you know that your children are working contrary to law?

A. I didn't know there was any law.

Q. Did you know that if I should go to Fall River and prosecute their employer, he could be compelled to pay a fine for employing your children?

A. No, sir, being no scholar.

We have presented this evidence, which might easily be extended, and which has not been controverted, with some fulness of detail that the legislature and people of Massachusetts may know the criminal violation of the statutes enacted in good faith for the protection and schooling of that portion of the children of our Commonwealth most exposed to overwork and neglect.

We feel sure that this evil needs only to be seen to be removed. Our people generally have had no conception of the existence of this wrong. They have felt something of that happy complacency and freedom from all responsibility in the matter, indicated by a writer who coolly tells the Commission, that "the State law regulates the attendance at school of children employed by manufacturing companies." The existence of this law is accepted as the assurance that all is right. But

the way the statute "regulates" the matter, is seen in the evidence presented.

We deem this branch of our subject one of deep and vital importance, and feel confident, that a proper examination of the whole matter in all its bearings will lead, not merely to the faithful observance of such laws as we have, but to the adoption of a change in the statute, more favorable to the proper development and schooling of the children in our manufacturing districts.

Proposed Change in the Law.

It is as plain, that children from twelve to eighteen years of age—the period best fitted to the acquisition of useful knowledge—require *more than eleven* weeks schooling, annually, as it is that they should not be confined to *eleven hours* of daily labor. The statute, as it stands, is too limited in time. Massachusetts, whose pride is her common schools, should not permit any child between the proper school-going age and fifteen, to be subjected, either through the avarice of the employer, or the necessity of the parents, to such a curtailment of the educational advantages she so liberally furnishes for every child.

English Experience.

We are rushing into the same fearful condition in which England found her manufacturing districts years ago. The long hours for children, placed at an early and delicate age in factories, and the consequent neglect of education, led so directly to a deterioration in health and character, to a letting down of the whole nature and constitution, physical, intellectual and moral, that at last the attention of thoughtful minds and the sympathy of benevolent hearts were enlisted, and what is known as the "*half-time system*" was adopted: giving to each child under a certain age a given number of hours schooling every day, and limiting his labor in the factory to five and a half hours. This system inaugurated a new era in the condition of the manufacturing districts. Its happy effect was presented to the Commission in a valuable paper by William P. Atkinson Esq., who has given the subject careful study. Mr. Atkinson's testimony is, that the new system was not only the

means of producing more efficient, intelligent and valuable laborers, as of course it would do, but, that the children educated on the half-time system, alternating work with study, were better scholars than those educated in the schools where no work was required; thus proving not only the value of schools to the children of the poor, but the value of labor to the children of the rich. As our common school system is so thoroughly established, and as all our manufacturing villages have more or less a mixed population, the children of merchants, mechanics and factory operatives attending the same school, it *may* be difficult, (although the Commission is not unanimous on that point,) to adopt the half-time plan in detail; but we may secure a part, at least, of its beneficial results, by demanding the same amount of schooling as now indicated in the statutes, every *six* months, instead of every *twelve* months, as now provided; thus doubling the amount of schooling, and lessening correspondingly the amount of labor.

But with the view of encouraging, as fast and as far as practicable, the "half-time system," we would have it provided, that, in all cases where this system is adopted and carried out in good faith, the laws in the sections referred to shall not be considered binding.

We suggest, also, that a suitable person or persons be appointed by the governor, and clothed with full power of inspection, whose duty shall be to see that the laws concerning this subject be faithfully obeyed, and to bring suits when they are violated. Such officers should report annually to the legislature the condition and wants of that class of children to which the law refers.

It is plain that no change in the law will meet the difficulty, without adequate means for its enforcement. We regard, therefore, this last suggestion as vitally important to the success of all legislation on the subject. Here has been one great difficulty with the law as it stands. Inadequate as it is, it has not been enforced, for want of a responsible person, willing to incur the odium of making the complaint, and entering upon the prosecution. We are persuaded, from the testimony before us, that the difficulty in enforcing the law does not lie with the employer or the parents exclusively. Interest and necessity both combine in producing the violation,

and it is only necessary that a thoroughly competent person, whose heart is in the work, and who sees clearly the importance of the law to the highest welfare of the children, be appointed to the responsible trust of securing its enforcement.

We urge immediate and prompt action in this matter, not only on the high grounds of humanity and religion, which make the weak and needy the special objects of fostering and tender care, but also on the ground of enlightened self-interest, which is always found to be in harmony with right principles of action. Health and education, considered in their higher relations to the inner life, moral force and sacred uses of a being "made but little lower than the angels," cannot be estimated. We need the arithmetic of heaven for that. But we may make some approaches toward an estimate of the *pecuniary* value of health and education to the *State*, and so see more clearly that in exercising a parental care over her more needy children, she is funding capital that will yield the most satisfactory return. We ask your attention, therefore, to a few facts bearing directly upon this point.

Pecuniary Value of Healthy Men.

In the "Memorial of the Boston Sanitary Association," submitted to the legislature in 1861,—a memorial crowded full of thoughts and facts, that should be seriously pondered at every fireside in the Commonwealth,—it is estimated from statistics carefully gathered by one whose name carries with it well earned authority, that "the average pecuniary worth of a man, during the self-sustaining period, from fifteen to seventy, is about four hundred dollars annually. Supposing the whole of the productive class could be kept in working order through the whole period allowed to the most favored, and they could labor fifty-five years, then the total earnings of each would be twenty-seven thousand dollars, and his life would be worth so much to the State, for he would contribute that amount to the general wealth or income."

Now if each healthy man, who lives out his rounded life of threescore and ten, has a pecuniary value to the State of twenty-seven thousand dollars, which value is of course reduced by whatever shortens life, or impairs health; and if putting young children, from seven to twelve years old, into factories to

work eleven hours a day tends to the production of a diseased, enfeebled, inefficient and shortened life, how plainly it is for the *pecuniary* interest of the State to put a stop to this wasteful as well as inhuman practice, and adopt such measures as shall best conduce to the healthy physical development of this large class of children, destined to become wealth-producers or wealth-consumers, according as they are cared for or neglected in childhood.

Pecuniary Value of Education.

The value of *education* to the material wealth of the State is also susceptible of similar demonstration. Hands moved by ignorant brains cannot even dig, or plough, or plane, or hew, or weave, in successful competition with those guided by brains that have received the healthy discipline of common school training. Mr. Mann, while secretary of the Board of Education, opened a correspondence "with many of the most practical, sagacious, and intelligent business men" of the State, men of large observation, who had large numbers of men in their employment, with the special object of ascertaining the difference in productive ability—natural capacities being equal—between the educated and the uneducated; between those who had been trained to think by a good common school education, and those whose minds have been left in the rough. We present to your notice some of the results of his investigations, gathered from his fifth annual report.

J. K. Mills, Esq, of Boston, writes: "The average number of operatives annually employed for the last three years, is 1,200. Of this number there are forty-five unable to write their names. The difference between the wages earned by the forty-five and the average wages of an equal number of the better educated class is about 27 per cent. in favor of the latter. The difference between twenty-nine of the lowest class and twenty-nine of the highest is 66 per cent. My belief is that the best cotton mill in New England, with such operatives only as the forty-five mentioned above, who are unable to write their names, would *never yield the proprietors a profit.* I cannot imagine any situation in life where the want of a common school education would be more severely felt, or be attended with worse consequences than in our manufacturing villages;

nor, on the other hand, is there anywhere such advantages can be improved with greater benefit to all parties."

H. Bartlett, Esq., of Lowell, writes: "I can say that I have come in contact with a great variety of character and disposition, and have seen mind applied to productions in the mechanic and manufacturing arts, possessing different degrees of intelligence, from gross ignorance to a high degree of cultivation; and I have no hesitation in affirming that I have found the best educated to be the most profitable help; even those females who merely tend machinery give a result somewhat in proportion to the advantages enjoyed in early life for education; those who have had a good common school education giving as a class invariably, a better production than those brought up in ignorance.

"I have uniformly found the better educated as a class possessing a higher and better state of morals, more orderly and respectful in their deportment, and more ready to comply with the wholesome and necessary regulations of the establishment. And in times of agitation on account of some change in regulations or wages, I have always looked to the most intelligent, best educated and the most moral for support, and have seldom been disappointed. For while they are the last to submit to imposition, they *reason;* and if your requirements are reasonable, they will generally acquiesce, and exert a salutary influence upon their associates; but the ignorant and uneducated I have generally found the most turbulent and troublesome, acting under the impulse of excited passion and jealousy. * * *

"I am aware that there is a feeling to a certain but I hope limited extent, that knowledge among the great mass is dangerous; that it creates discontent, and tends to insubordination. But I believe the fear is groundless, and that our danger will come from an opposite source. * * * My mind has been drawn to this subject for a long time. I have watched its operations and seen its results, and am satisfied that the pecuniary interest of the owner is promoted by the general diffusion of knowledge and morality of those in his employ."

John Clark, Esq., also from Lowell, writes: "I have had under my superintendence, upon an average, about 1,500 persons of both sexes, and my experience fully sustains and

confirms the results to which Mr. Bartlett has arrived. I have found, with very few exceptions, the best educated among my hands to be the most capable, intelligent, energetic, industrious, economical and moral; that they produce the best work and the most of it, with the least injury to the machinery. I am very sure that neither men of property nor society at large have anything to fear from a more general diffusion of knowledge. We have in our mills about 180 females, who have at some time been engaged in teaching schools. Many of them teach in the summer months and work in the mills during the winter. The average wages of these ex-teachers I find to be 17¾ per cent. above the general wages of our mills, and forty per cent. above the wages of the twenty-six who cannot write their names."

The letters from which we have made these extracts, Mr. Mann says, "are a fair specimen, and no more than a fair specimen, of a mass of facts which I have obtained from the most authentic sources. They seem to prove incontestibly, that education is not only a moral renovator, and a multiplier of intellectual power, but that it is also the most prolific parent of material riches. It has a right, therefore, not only to be included in the grand inventory of a nation's resources, but to be placed at the very head of this inventory. Considering education then as the producer of wealth, it follows that the more educated a people are, the more will they abound in all those conveniences, comforts and satisfactions which money will bring; and other things being equal, the increase of competency, and the decrease of pauperism, will be measurable on this scale. * * * * Yet, when in all our congressional debates upon this subject, or in the discussions and addresses of national conventions, has this fundamental principle been brought out, and one at least of its most important and legitimate influences displayed, viz.: that it is our wisest policy as citizens,—if indeed it be not a duty of self-preservation as men,—to improve the education of our whole people, both in its quantity and its quality?"

We are happy to present this testimony from that eminent Philanthropist, and prince of educators, whose truest monument—better than bronze, and more enduring—is seen in the improved condition of the common schools of his native State,

for whose welfare he gave ten years of his noble life. "Though dead, he still speaketh."

Now, when even the material wealth of the State is so vitally linked with the health and education of the industrial classes, can the Commonwealth *afford* to peril her prosperity, by permitting such fatal damage to the health and culture of any portion of her children as is shown in the evidence presented?

This evil is not indeed confined to manufacturing districts. A letter from Hadley states that, "some children are kept weaving palm-leaf, to the detriment of their schooling." And worse yet, that "boys and girls are also in the *tobacco fields* at some seasons when they should be at school." Another from Chelmsford, says, "many boys in the *farming towns* are *unnecessarily* kept from school to help about planting and weeding, and the various little matters known among farmers as chores in winter. So that a great many boys grow up without a desire for education, and those who have a desire for it desert the farm as soon as they can, disgusted with its labors."

But, while the evil is felt to some extent all over the State, it is much more marked, for obvious reasons, in manufacturing districts, and the temptations are much greater, from necessity on the one hand, and the profits of "small help" on the other, to sacrifice the innocent victims on the twin altars of need and greed. Let wholesome laws, such as a wise policy will enact, be rigidly enforced in these districts, and the happy influence would flow out into all places where children are employed, enriching the farms and factories with a higher class of laborers, and giving to the whole State a more healthy, intelligent, and virtuous population.

The salutary influence of such a law would be felt also in our State asylums and almshouses,—for a large percentage of the children sent there are from that very class this law is designed to protect,—and the State could richly afford any necessary assistance to needy parents, if the children could thus be saved from the perils of pauperism, and fitted for honorable and useful service.

Besides this, there are between one and two hundred children sent out, annually, from our State institutions as apprentices or otherwise. The number of such in all parts of the State and the adjoining States, cannot be less than a thousand. At

present, little is known of their condition and treatment; and the appointment of a visiting agent has often been urged upon the legislature. It would seem, therefore, most fitting, that inspectors, if appointed, should, in addition to the duties already indicated, be authorized to visit this class of children and examine into their condition. We would also suggest the propriety of this inspector, or, if more than one, the chairman of the board, being a member, *ex-officio*, of the Board of State Charities, the duties of the office being akin to those performed by that board.

We believe the people of this State are ready for legislative action in the direction we have indicated. Whatever difference of opinion there may be as to the propriety of legislating upon the hours of labor for *adults*, all believe it is perfectly legitimate for the State to legislate for the protection and welfare of its children, especially for those most exposed.

There is, also, we think, a growing conviction, that young children, if employed in factories at all, should not be required to labor full time. Edward Atkinson Esq., treasurer of the Indian Orchard Mills, near Springfield, stated to the Commission his opinion, that the present statute in regard to limiting the hours of labor for children under twelve years, was not what was needed. He would advise the adoption of the English half-time system. He had attempted, last summer, to introduce a system which should conduce to greater health among the children employed by the corporation, and to reduce their hours of labor; and, though he had met with some difficulties, he hoped to be able to put it in operation the coming season.

P. T. Jackson, Esq., writes: "I agree with Mr. Atkinson, that it is desirable to limit the hours of labor for children. I doubt very much the propriety of allowing them to work before thirteen or fourteen years of age."

Samuel Fay, Esq., of Lowell, writes: "In no case do I employ any who are under twelve years of age."

More and more clearly are thoughtful men coming to see the evil we have been considering, and more and more earnestly are they inquiring for a remedy. Childhood being nature's own season of preparation for manhood, it is evident, that to stunt the body with overwork, or leave the mind in ignorance, is not only gross cruelty to the child, which will surely react in

righteous retribution, but a deep and lasting injury to the vital elements of State and national prosperity.

The Governor's Words.

His Excellency, in his recent Inaugural, speaking of the importance he attaches to the Annual Report from the Educational Department, says: "Other reports are significant, but this is elementary, and animates all the rest. Many theories, and laws, and systems, prevail in Massachusetts, but they all at last rest upon the foundation of popular education. This it is which imparts to her character at home dignity and power, and which gives to her presence in the circle of the States an influence which outlives the transitory fortunes of faction and party."

The Commission, in closing this part of their Report, have only to urge upon the legislature, respectfully and earnestly, that every child of the State, whether by birth or adoption, may feel the redeeming influence of these truthful words through such legislative action as shall secure to the poorest and least cared for of all a reasonable amount of those educational advantages from which flow "dignity and power." Let the State give to every child *a fair chance* for the good outfit of a healthy body, and an educated mind, and then if, at his majority, with no special misfortune intervening, he cannot get his own living, let him take his place without a murmur in some asylum for the unfortunate, or school for the "feeble-minded," while the State works on in undiscouraged assurance that better material will produce worthier results. We think that the Commonwealth, whose boast it is that she "raises men," is bound to take special care that through no fault of hers shall the immortal crop fail.

II. Adult Labor.

In entering upon this part of our Report, we will first present in brief the hours of labor in the following branches of industry, represented at the hearings, and by letter.

Hours of Labor in the Different Trades.

Shipwrights.—This trade has two departments—construction and repairs—or *new work* and *old work*. For *new work* the time is ten hours per day, from 7, A. M., to 6, P. M., with an

interval of one hour for dinner; except when the sun rises after seven, and sets before six, when the time is from sun to sun. The shortest time between sun and sun is nine hours twenty-four minutes.

On *old work*, the time in summer is from 8, A. M. to 4, P. M., with an interval of twenty minutes in the forenoon for lunch, and one hour for dinner, making the time twenty minutes less than eight hours. This work is destructive to clothes and tools; it is better paid than the other. For all overwork double pay is received. Those who work by the job, in both departments, generally work the same number of hours as those by the day.

Carpenters, *Masons*, *Painters*, *Foundrymen*—ten hours.

Machinists,—in Boston and vicinity,—work ten hours. During the last year some shops have reduced the hours to nine on Saturdays.

Printers.—Generally work by the piece.

Blacksmiths.—The usual time, ten hours. As a general thing, one hour off on Saturday.

Iron Moulders.—Average time, nine and one-half hours per day.

Stone-Cutters.—Ten hours in summer; after November 15, from 7 1-2, A. M., till dark.

Mining Iron Ore.—Eleven hours.

Coopers.—Ten hours fifteen minutes.

Teamsters.—Eleven hours fifteen minutes.

Conductors and Drivers of Horse Cars.—Fourteen hours.

Glass-Workers.—Ten hours for all the operatives, except the *firemen* and the *lead-makers*, who, being obliged to alternate night and day, work twelve hours.

Paper-Makers, (Holyoke.)—Mill hands, twelve hours.

Factory Operatives.—The general rule in the large manufacturing towns is eleven hours. But there are exceptions. Waltham mills are reported eleven and one-quarter or eleven and one-half hours; Middlefield woollen factory, thirteen hours.

Needle-Women.—Mainly piece work; hours variable—generally long.

Employees of the American Watch Manufacturing Company, Waltham.—Ten hours. Considerable overwork done, which is well paid.

Workmen of the Southern Cotton Gin Company, Bridgewater.—Ten hours—less in winter.

Bakers.—The time varies in different establishments—from nine and one-half to seventeen hours.

Shoemakers, Harness-Makers, Hatters.—Work mainly by the piece. Time variable.

Agriculturists.—Hired labor, twelve hours in summer—less in winter. Those who own their farms work as long or short as they please.

From this brief summary it appears that what is known as the "Ten Hour System" is generally adopted in mechanical employments, and that eleven hours is the general rule in cotton factories. The shortest time established by custom for a day's labor, is that adopted by the class of shipwrights engaged on "old work," seven hours forty minutes. The longest time is seventeen and one-half hours, adopted in a few bakeries. The condition of the workmen in this department of labor we deem worthy of special notice.

Bakers.

From a carefully prepared table sent to the Commission, giving valuable statistics of twenty bakeries in Boston and vicinity, it appears that in two shops the workmen labor seventeen and one-half hours, in one other seventeen hours, and in two others sixteen. In four shops they work twelve hours a day the week through, Sundays included. Cake-bakers work twelve hours, with an additional *five hours* on Saturday nights, and *four hours* on Sunday morning. The evil of these long hours is greatly aggravated by the fact, that in most bakeries the work is done mainly in the night. The baker begins his day generally in the afternoon, and closes it in the morning from four to seven o'clock. All the shops reported to us work Sundays, some beginning as early as 9, A. M., others from 1 to 3, P. M. With such continuous labor at long hours, reversing the order of nature by turning night into day, sleeping while the world is waking, and waking while the world is sleeping, taking only a part of Saturday—in some instances not even that—as a substitute for the Sunday's rest, so precious to the laborer, we do not wonder at the fact shown in the table, that in nine of the bakeries represented, not one of the workmen attended

church. We select from a report accompanying the table the following brief statements:

"Incapable of labor at forty-three years." "Average age of apprenticeship, fifteen years." "Their boyhood life, from fifteen and upwards, is confined to their trade." "No possible time for spiritual or mental improvement." "In after years the time absorbed by labor and sleep precludes the possibility of any improvement." "Almost total neglect of religious duty, from the fact of Sunday being the first (work) day of the baker's week." "Consequent passion for strong drink." "Premature decay and an early grave."

If these statements can be relied on, the Commission are of opinion that in no branch of industry that has been presented to their consideration, is there greater need of reform than in this, which furnishes us with the staff of life, and they would express their hearty sympathy with the bakers in their efforts to lessen the hours of labor, hoping the needed change may soon be accomplished.

In this connection we submit the substance of what we have gathered, in response to the question of our circular concerning the "wages of women as compared with those of men, and particularly the wages and condition of that large class of female laborers called needle-women."

Wages of Women.

In reply to the first part of the question we have received widely different estimates, as will be seen in the following extracts:—

"From one-fourth to one-half as much as males." "Something more than one-third the wages of adult men." "Women receive about two-thirds the price of men." "Wages of women compare favorably with those of men." "Wages of women are continually increasing."

From *Holyoke* we receive the statement, "Women earn from seventy-five cents to one dollar per day." From *Chicopee*, "Women can earn about 90 per cent. as much as men." From *Lowell*, "Males average $1.39 per day; females 96 cents per day." From *Fall River*, "Most of them are paid by the pound or the piece; and the amount earned varies greatly, according to the habits and capacity of the employees. When

they are brought directly in competition with males, we find the average earnings but very little less." From *Lawrence*, "Women are now paid very liberally; in many departments receiving as much daily wages as men. I see no reason why they should not be paid as much for the same work, but they are rarely able to do as much."

We are glad to put on record sentiments so liberal and just as those from Lawrence, and to believe, notwithstanding some discouraging facts, that the wages of women are continually increasing. We hope this movement in the right direction will be seen not only among the more favored classes of workwomen, who are able to plead their own cause, but that it may reach that large class of female laborers called

NEEDLE-WOMEN.

This is a broad term, since there are few women of any use in the world, who do not ply the needle more or less. But we use the term to designate those who are dependent upon their needle for support. Some of this class,—milliners, dress-makers, tailoresses, etc.,—are well paid. Their services are in demand; they fill respectable places in society; their worth is recognized; they live comfortably, sometimes lay up money. A writer from Newton Lower Falls says, "Several here, by working out and taking in work, and taking work to be done evenings have supported their families and laid up money; one over $2,000." This is as it should be. We rejoice in such facts, and desire to see them multiplied.

But there is another and a very different class of needle-women, in our cities especially, whose condition is in sad contrast with those named above. Many of them unskilful with the needle, but needy, and obliged to work on coarse sewing for whatever they can get; who "live from hand to mouth," or try to, though the hand furnishes the mouth with but scanty supply. We have sought earnestly for information concerning this class, but have received less that is definite to report than the subject demands. One of the ministers-at-large in this city writes, in response to our inquiry,—

"The condition of the needle-women of Boston has long engaged my attention and called forth my sympathies. * * It is with difficulty that those who do plain sewing can earn more than three dollars per

week. I have known women to make coarse pantaloons as low as eighty-four cents a dozen, and flannel shirts for seventy-five cents a dozen; being able to make only a dozen of either of these in a week. But these are extreme cases."

Speaking of the remedy for this evil, and how the price of such labor may be increased, he says:—

"If the wives and daughters of farmers, who do not need the employment, would cease doing 'slop work,' and young women would go into good families as 'help,' instead of insisting on getting a living by the needle, there would be such a demand for labor that the prices would increase; and thus poor widows and others, who are obliged to depend upon the use of the needle for a livelihood, would be able to support themselves comfortably, and that, too, without trenching upon the hours needed for sleep."

We have no doubt of the truth of these suggestions. But they only show how deep the evil is, and how difficult of removal, save by the slow action of those mental and moral forces that strike through the outward condition and take hold of the character.

In the meantime, what can be done to meet the immediate and pressing want?

The Needle-woman's Friend Society, formed for the purpose of giving employment with adequate compensation, to indigent females, is doing a good work in a quiet way. But its means are limited. It furnishes a small amount of work during the winter to about fifty women, who work on coarse sewing; and to about sixty the year through, of a better class, who sew on fine work. Even the small amount earned by those who work on coarse sewing,—from fifty cents to one dollar a week,—is eagerly sought for and gratefully received as an essential means of paying the weekly rent, or supplying some imperative want. We think this society worthy of a richer treasury and a more generous patronage.

The *New England Women's Auxiliary Association, Special Relief Branch*—have also been expending, most wisely, some of their surplus sanitary funds during the present winter in furnishing work for soldiers' widows, and needy persons connected with soldiers' families. Of the three hundred regular dependents upon this society, about sixty are furnished with a small amount of work weekly, and we are assured by

the managers of this charity that five hundred of this class might be beneficially aided in this way, if they had the means.

During the war, certain noble women in our city united in obtaining government contracts for a certain class of clothing, in order to supply the *needle-women* with work at a fair price, giving those who made the garments not only the benefit of the contract, but much more, in some instances, than was received. In this way about nine hundred or one thousand women were employed. Still, there were more applicants than work; and the eagerness with which the work was sought, the gratitude expressed for it, the marked improvement of the women thus furnished with decently paid employment, not only in the manner of doing their work, but in deportment and general character, showing a grateful appreciation of patient instruction and kind, womanly sympathy;—all these manifest fruits were such as to show how much might be done through some such agency, if wisely conducted, by women, not by men, not only for the present relief, but the permanent benefit of this large class so deeply needing friendly aid. We are fully aware that all such remedies *relieve* rather than *cure*. But the cure is just that for which the world has waited long. We hope it may be near; but it may be distant; and while "social science" is busy, as it should be with this, among other great problems of social reform, we think much real good might be done by some such method as that we have described, only on a larger scale, by which a common kind of work should be furnished exclusively to the needle-women of the cities at a living price.

With these details, which we have thought proper to present as bearing directly upon "the condition and prospects of the industrial classes," we pass to the great question in the discussion of which this Commission originated.

III. Reduction of the Hours of Labor.

Nearly all the employees in the various branches of labor represented at the hearings and by letter, were in favor of a reduction. Nearly all the employers were against a reduction. Some of the exceptions we shall notice in another connection. We give, below, a brief digest of the common arguments, *pro* and *con*, in parallel columns:

PRO.

Overwork is the fruitful source of innumerable evils. Ten and eleven hours daily of hard labor are more than the human system can bear, save in a few exceptional cases,—more than would be needed if each would do his share. It cripples the body, ruins health, shortens life. It stunts the mind, gives no time for culture, no opportunity for reading, study or mental improvement. It leaves the system jaded and worn, with no *ability* to study. It tempts to spend the little time between work and sleep, in trashy reading, that amuses rather than improves. It tends to dissipation in various forms. The exhausted system craves stimulants. This opens the door to other indulgences, from which flow not only the degeneracy of individuals, but the degeneracy of the race. Workingmen as a class are thus let down, and the whole community suffers. Reduce the hours of labor and you will see a change. Give the workingman time for home duties, for self-improvement, and then if he does not use it wisely, it is his own fault. He asks for an opportunity to show himself a man, for a fair chance to use his brain as well as his muscles.

Not only the interest of the laborer but of labor, demands a reduction of hours. You must make labor tolerable before you can make it honorable. It is degraded by ignorance, it is elevated by intelligence. To dignify work, you must dignify the workman. This is the workingman's countr The welfare of the State and nation demand that time be given him to fit himself for worthy citizenship. A free country demands an intelligent as well as a free people. Now, while the nation is being reconstructed, is the time to reconstruct our labor system.

CON.

Men are injured by idleness more than by overwork. Ten die of "nothing to do," where one dies of doing too much. Men and women used to work twelve or fifteen hours a day without injury. It is only the drones who plead for a reduction. Grant them eight hours and soon they will work only six. The race is degenerating for lack of good honest work. It is not labor, but vice in various forms, that cripples the body and stultifies the mind. More leisure would lead to more vice and crime. Hours saved from labor would be given to dissipation. What men most need for improvement is not leisure but disposition. One who really wishes to improve, will find or make opportunity. "Where there's a will there's a way." Men of mark are men of work. Reduce hours and you reduce pay. Reduce pay and you reduce the facilities of living. Reduce the facilities of living and you reduce the means of improvement. So the workingmen act against their own interest in asking legal restrictions. To legislate upon labor is to degrade it. Reduce the hours of labor in *one State*, and you drive business and capital into another. Let the matter alone and it will regulate itself. The law of supply and demand is better than any statute. Things are well as they are, wages are high, all kinds of business are prosperous, poor people are laying up money as never before. It is the worst time in the world to agitate such a subject. We are loaded down with a national debt. We must pay it off. We need all hands at work for this. Let us all take hold with a will, quit grumbling, and labor itself will be a means not only of wealth, but improvement, physical, mental, and moral.

These parallel columns, which might be extended through pages with the same result, give of course, but a limited and inadequate idea of what is said *for* and *against* a reduction of the hours of labor. They are designed only as a "brief" of the more prominent thoughts on both sides of the question.

Reserving for another part of our Report, our own views upon the general subject of a reduction of hours, we pass to a consideration of the proposed

Eight Hour Law.

Those in favor of a reduction of hours were not all agreed as to the wisdom of an eight hour law. Some thought that the change from eleven hours to eight hours was too great, and that factory operatives should be content with a change from eleven to ten. There was a difference of opinion also in regard to the nature of the proposed law. Some of the workingmen advocated a prohibitory statute, making it penal to work more than eight hours. The objections to this are too obvious to need more than a passing notice.

The workingman's power to labor is not only his present capital, but the source of all his future capital. It is his living. It stands for food, clothes, home, for himself and his family. It stands for school-house, lecture-room, church, newspaper, library, travel, social position, everything that lifts him out of pauperism into manly independence,—and the legislature that shall attempt to limit by law the workingman's right to the free use of that capacity so vitally linked with everything dear to a man, would be justly chargeable, either with gross folly or high-handed tyranny. Children and minors may be properly restrained for their own good. But when the season of pupilage is over, and the goal of manhood reached, then it is for the *man*, and not the *State* to say how many, or how few hours in the day he will use hand or brain for himself or those dear to him.

But the great majority, growing at last to a good degree of unanimity, asked only that "eight hours" should be regarded as a legal day, in the absence of a special contract. Such action on the part of the State would give, it was thought, a kind of moral countenance to the movement, and tend

gradually to its adoption, without interfering in any way with individual liberty.

It is true that such a law would seem to be quite harmless, save the needless trouble it would cause in making special contracts; for mills would still run as long as the proprietors deemed best, and men and women would still work as many hours as they pleased.

But this of itself appears to the Commission a serious objection to such a law. Its inefficiency would render it *worthless*, as well as *harmless*. We have too many laws already on the statute book for "moral influence;"—laws that are continually evaded,—that nobody thinks of obeying,—that are dead, and like all other dead things, should be buried. We deem it very unwise to multiply such laws.

But the radical objection to making eight hours, or any other number of hours, a legal day's work, is that such a law, giving one measure of time for all branches of labor, would be unequal in its action. There are some employments at which men may work ten, or even twelve hours, with less wear and tear than they could work six, at others. Dr. Jarvis, of Dorchester, to whom we have already alluded, says, in a letter to a member of the Commission, that he employs his clerks who are engaged upon statistics and calculations requiring great concentration of mind, only *seven hours* a day, believing this to be as long as they can work safely and accurately. He says also in regard to the proposed law,

"It seems neither expedient nor just, to establish any single measure of time to be applied to occupations which make such different drafts on the human forces. The severity or lightness of labor, the violence of exertion, as in wielding the sledge hammer, lifting stone, or on the other hand, tailoring, shoemaking, engraving, etc.; the persistence or variableness of the exertions, employments that require the exercise of one set of muscles only, as in drilling rocks with the drill-bar, or of all the muscles of the body, as farming and gardening,—all these have their influence in the expenditure and exhaustion of force, and the continuance of the supply of strength and power to labor, and all should be considered in determining the hours that should be given to work."

"The same discrimination should be applied to the other circumstances of labor—the exposure to the severity of the elements, to intense cold or intense heat, and to storms;—also the supply of air.

Those who work in small shops, dangerously small for the respiration of the occupants, can work, or ought to work, less than those who work in the free air abroad, The purity of the air as affected by the material worked upon, or the processes conducted, the lightness or darkness of the place, in some employments the effect of contact with the matter handled—all these have very important effects on the health and the continuance of labor."

These statements are based on undeniable facts. They show the *inherent objection* to one measure of time for all branches of labor. Such legislation would necessarily be *partial*, favoring light and healthy labor, much more than the heavy and unhealthy. We see no possibility of impartial legislation on the subject, except by fixing different hours for different employments; and such nice adjustments would be too delicate a matter for legislators to attempt. None but the workmen themselves, or those who make the subject a special study, would be qualified to judge in such matters.

But still another objection to an eight hour law is the exceeding difficulty, not to say impossibility of applying it to some of the most common and necessary branches of labor. All domestic and household work must be an exception. For if somebody did not work more than eight hours *at home*, work *abroad* would have to be reduced at least to six hours, or the laborer would be obliged to go to work without his breakfast, and to bed without his supper. Market-men, provision dealers, grocers, and all such as supply the daily recurring wants of workingmen, could not adopt it, for it is only before or after the day's work that the laborer can attend to these imperative wants of himself and household.

The farming interest also, the great staple industrial interest of the State and the country, could not adopt it. Cows must be milked when udders are full, and "hay must be made while the sun shines." Leander Witherell, Esq., who ably represented the agriculturists at the hearings, presented the following facts as indicating the extent of this branch of industry in our country: "In 1860 the amount of cultivated land in the United States was 163,110,720 acres. The estimated cash value of these farms that year was $6,645,045,007." This value had more than doubled in the ten previous years. Suppose the value to have increased in the same ratio

since then—a low estimate—and the present value would be about *ten billions* of dollars. It is a serious consideration that this vast interest of the country could not conform to an eight hour law, if adopted.

The same is true of all ocean, lake, and river navigation. Lee shores, squalls and sunken reefs on sea and lake; narrow channels, swift currents and grounded snags on rivers, do not admit of any eight hour restrictions, but require a law of watchful vigilance that cannot be regulated by any fixed measure of time.

To obviate these objections it has been suggested that the law, if passed, should not be general but specific in its application; that it should be limited to the *employees of the State, and the United States;* that in our navy yards, public works, etc., the eight hour law should be adopted. This, it is said, would satisfy the workingmen as a first step, and could be easily done without disturbing any private interests.

We admit this could be easily done. As the average time in navy yards is only a little more than *nine* hours a day now, the change would not be seriously felt, save in swelling the crowd of applicants for employment on the public works.

Our objection to this proposition is that such legislation would be *partial* in a very offensive sense. It would embrace not only a very few, comparatively, of the workingmen of the State, but the very class least needing legislation, because least exposed to injury from overwork.

The Commission therefore are opposed to the adoption of an eight hour law.

1. Because they deem it unsound in principle to apply one measure of time to all kinds of labor.

2. Because, if adopted as a general law, in the way proposed, it would be rendered void by special contracts, and so add another to the dead laws that cumber the statutes.

3. Because a very large proportion of the industrial interests of the country *could not* observe it.

4. Because if restricted, as some propose, to the employees of the State, it would be manifestly *partial*, and therefore unjust.

We will now ask the attention of the General Court to a few thoughts upon

IV. The Relation of Capital to Labor.

Capital is the result of labor, viewed in relation to the production of value. But it cannot produce value except in co-operation with further labor. Hence, since labor alone originated capital, and capital can produce nothing without labor, labor is manifestly in an important sense superior to capital. It is its creator and preserver. This relation is too manifest to escape the comprehension of the dullest workman. Hence very naturally arises the thought in his mind, if his ability to labor happens to constitute his own entire capital, "my labor is better entitled to the value produced by its co-operation with my neighbor's capital, than is his ownership of the capital in the absence of any co-operating labor of his own." And this thought is certainly true in regard to priority of claim, at least. The right of the living laborer to enjoy fruit comes *before* that of the inanimate capital. This right obtains practical shape in the elementary calculations on which industrial enterprises are founded, thus: wages are set down almost uniformly as something like a fixed or constant quantity to the debit of the account, before the value of the great contingent, or variable, the profit of capital, is ascertained. Wages are to be positively paid, at a prescribed rate, whether the mere capital is to gain or lose by the co-operation, or joint agency.

But the workingman misunderstands his own interests as well as his own rights, if he conceives that because his right has a natural priority to that of capital, he can invoke legislation to interfere in the bargain between him and the capitalist, and give him a larger share of the value that is or may be produced, than the capitalist is willing to agree to. The legislature cannot take the first step in this direction, without so far subverting the right of individual property, and establishing communism. The legislature may define what things shall be the subjects of property and what shall not, but having admitted anything to be the subject of property, it cannot without self-contradiction take it from one man and give it to another, unless it can allege some just cause of such action, or some crime. It is no cause of action to allege that one man has more than he needs and another less than he desires.

Province of Law.

Law having declined the task of establishing communism,—that is, of being a substitute for the spiritual forces of the entire community,—begins by admitting the right of the individual laborer to the capital he creates. He, rather than any other, should enjoy the fruit of his own labor. This implies that he may consume, exchange, save or use it as he pleases, so long as he injures no one else thereby. Has he wrought a flint chisel, arrow, or tomahawk? No one else shall use it, says the law, but with his consent and on his terms. It may be his duty as a man or a savage to lend it, but the law has not undertaken the business of making him generous, but only safe and harmless. It leaves room for gospel. The essence of law is nothing but force. If it undertakes to make men good, what becomes of its protection of the rights of property? This would be a usurpation of the throne of God, and even He, with the hearts of all men open before Him, makes an impartial distribution of His rain and sunshine.

Law may regulate the descent of property, that is, it may distinguish between the will of the dead and the living. It may tax property for its own protection. But it cannot invade the principle that a loyal man has a right to do as he pleases with his own, in the case of the millionaire, without damaging it in the person of the day laborer.

If the vast profits of certain accumulations of capital were reduced, to raise wages above the market price brought about by the present unchecked relation of supply to demand, the temporary benefit to the laborer may be admitted. But it may be questioned whether this benefit, however caused, could be permanent. And if it resulted from legal compulsion rather then the spontaneous sympathy of the capitalist with the laborer, it is little less than certain that the reaction would worse than efface it.

This utter impotence of law to check the accumulation of property in the hands of a comparatively few, and to govern the distribution of values produced, is certainly melancholy in some aspects. It seems sad to think that in a civilization so abounding in wealth as ours, tens of thousands whose daily labor is creating the capital which swells by millions per annum in the hands of a few hundreds of other and probably not

worthier men, should themselves be so meanly lodged, clothed and fed, and have so small share in the exultations and grandeur of our human life. But this sadness may have small legitimate cause, and be no reason for either rubbing out the figures and beginning anew, or meddling with the principle of free trade between rich and poor. As between adult parties, this stepping in to say by statute how many hours a day the laborer shall work, means nothing in his favor, unless it means that he shall get more for less, or that the law shall make a better bargain for him than he can make for himself. This is, in fact, an old question, which time has long ago settled. The long struggle for the abolition of slavery, on which all the old civilizations rested, consisted in nothing but setting up the principle that it shall take two to make a bargain, and it was not till the capitalist was left as free as the laborer, that labor was really emancipated.

The Law of Usury.

"Money is by nature sterile," said Aristotle, and for more than a thousand years the world, heathen and Christian, insisted that a man who lent his money should require the return of no more than he lent. Still, common sense taught people that if the price of a sheep could be borrowed for a year, there might be a sheep and a lamb or two, at the end of it, out of which more than the loan could be repaid, and leave some mutton with the borrower. Hence, people were always ready to borrow. But when the lender had to face the sneers of society, he asked the more interest. Hence, in the old and middle ages, it was the worse for the laborer and the industrious poor, that the philosophers and saints set their faces against the idea that mere capital earns wages. The laborer is worthy of his hire, they said, but with the same breath th ey put under ban the means of hiring him. Under this ban against money in the Roman civilization, and the dark ages of the Christian, the proportion of capital borrowed was very small, and the rate of interest enormously high, thirty or forty per cent. per annum being nothing uncommon. As a matter of course, in this state of things very little capital, relative to the entire wealth of any country, was invested in industrial operations. In this state of things, if the laborers were not frequently deci-

mated by famines and attendant pestilences, it was because the governments under which they lived allowed them to be mere property themselves. If the laborers are to be free and live, capital must also be free. That is, the capitalist must have the right to make his own bargains. How much this interference of law to prevent the accumulation of capital did to benefit labor, the history of almost countless famines and pestilences can tell. The wolf was not far from the poor man's door in the middle ages. If he comes occasionally now, it is to snap off a luxury from the table, not to devour the children in the cradle.

For some two or three hundred years, since the prejudice against money began to decline, and our modern industry has been getting established, the laws have endeavored to regulate what they could not prevent—the lending of money at interest; and it is remarkable, that the effect of laws to reduce the rate of interest has always been to raise it. Nothing is better settled in practice in all commercial countries than the evasion of usury laws. Free trade in money has long been the practical rule wherever commerce and industry flourish. And what is the effect on the laborer?

If labor itself is a curse, the increase of it must be considered baneful, and there is no doubt that a free market for capital increases the amount of labor performed. But labor is in fact, and as a rule it is felt by the laborer to be, a blessing. It is a good thing of which one may doubtless have too much. But the easier capital is obtained by the employer, the more easily wages are paid. Other things being the same, the more capital there is invested in any business, the greater the demand for labor and the higher the wages. It is only in a money market substantially free, and under laws which secure the rights of property, that capital goes largely into industrial investments. Let us see what are the inducements necessary to draw capital into such investments.

The Employment of Capital.

As a general fact, capital once invested industrially cannot be reconverted. If it fails to yield a profit over wages and repairs, the principal itself is lost. Hence it is never so invested unless in the expectation of greater profit than that of

money lent with security for the return of the principal. In all manufacturing establishments the hazard of the capital is very great. There is not only the risk from the adverse action of the elements, but from the march of improvement, the mutations of fashion, and the fluctuations of the market for the products. It cannot be for the interest of laboring men that anything should be done to lessen the expectation of profits, which induces capital to go into industrial investments,—for every dollar so invested is pledged to pay wages or die; and nothing is more certain than that the greater the investment the greater the wages. Laborers are constantly and rapidly increasing; if invested capital does not also increase as rapidly, wages must diminish by the competition of the laborers. Let us suppose, that by a perfect combination of all the laborers, they could impose their own terms on the owners of invested capital,—for, if they could unite, invested capital is really at their mercy,—what would be the consequence? If the profits of capital were sensibly reduced, investment would slacken, and the prices of products going up would have the effect of reducing wages back to where they were before. The laborers would, therefore, gain nothing permanently by *imposing* terms. On the whole they must lose. Must laborers, therefore, abstain from all combination to fix the price of labor, and leave capitalists to combine to reduce the price? Capital is as impotent to reduce prices by combination as labor is. Capitalists are many and of all calibres. Some have individual skill and tact to manage for themselves, superior to that which can be commanded by any mass. Others who profess largely, have no skill at all. These diversities leave no possibility of the combination of all capitalists against the interests of the laborer. A large proportion of the employers, supposing a combination to have been effected to keep wages below their natural level, would at once grow discontented with the profits accruing to their capital under this arrangement, or with the share of labor falling to them under it; would refuse to sacrifice themselves for the benefit of incompetents, having surely no more sympathy for rival capital than for the laborers. The existence of any extensive combination to keep down the price of labor, or any general force of concert, additional to the force of interest, is of course only a misapprehension.

Capital Favors the Laborer by its Increase.

It is a fact which no one at all acquainted with industrial history can call in question, that the proportion of mere laborers who achieve more than a bare subsistence, increases with the increase of industrial capital. The chances for the laborer are far greater in England now than in the same country two hundred years ago. They are far greater in Massachusetts than they were before the commencement of our manufacturing system. When that system began, there were very few men who possessed capital enough to build profitable manufactories individually, and still fewer who dared risk enough to do it. But there were thousands who could and were willing to risk a little. These littles were combined by corporation franchises, which, in course of time, limited the risk to the stock subscribed. The corporation, as a creature of law, possesses no power or immunity whatsoever, which does not belong to an individual capitalist. The legislature merely creates and brings into the labor market a new customer for labor. This customer might be better or worse for having a soul; but as concerns each and every one who has labor to sell, the addition to this side of the market is a positive benefit, whether or no. Hence the absurdity of the cry of the laborers against corporations. Their interest lies in the increase of industrial capital, which corporations never fail to increase by collecting into large, active masses sums that are too small to act alone, or not large enough to act as efficiently.

It is true, that some investments of industrial capital are far more useful to the laborer than others. Those which produce what the laborer has to buy are more useful than those which produce either luxuries above his reach, or injurious articles, because they tend not only to enhance wages, but to cheapen subsistence. When cotton goods had to be imported, the laborer, perhaps, slept without sheets. When Massachusetts corporations had made sheeting five times as cheap, and wages twice as high, then the day laborer began to sleep in sheets as smooth and white as his employer's, while his children are sure of a school as good. And in that school, it is to be hoped, that they at least will learn that the corporations are not the natural enemies of their hard-working parents.

V. A Return to the Question of Hours.

Having shown that capital and labor are not natural enemies, as many have supposed, but real friends, though the friendship is often broken by mutual misunderstandings of each other's interests, we wish now to look again at the question of a reduction of hours from another stand-point. While we are opposed to an "eight hour *law*," for the reasons stated, we are not opposed to a reasonable reduction of the hours of labor by other and as we believe, better methods. We think that in many departments of labor there is serious injury from long hours; that body and mind both suffer from it; that there is need of a reform. We admit there is a *con* as well as a *pro* in the argument for reduction; and that men having the true interests of the workingmen at heart may take different sides of the question. We appreciate the force of much that is urged against a reduction. Still, when we look at the question in all its bearings, we are constrained to believe that the earnest call for a reduction of hours is reasonable.

Those who contend that ten hours is none too long for mechanics, and eleven hours none too long for factory operatives, do not always remember that these hours do not tell the whole story of the day's work. There is the time for breakfast and preparation for work, the time for dinner, the time for washing up and supper, stretching the *ten* hours into *twelve* or *thirteen*, and the *eleven* hours into *thirteen* or *fourteen*.

We cannot believe that the interests of the community require that so many hours each day should be given to manual labor. We believe man should be the master, not the servant of his work. We favor such a reduction of hours as may be necessary to make labor healthful to body and mind. We believe that in many branches of labor, as now conducted, there is more real injury than is generally supposed from

Overwork.

We do not care to justify this belief by any specific cases brought to our notice, for most of these cases are of such a nature that it is difficult to tell just how much other violations of the law of health may have done, in connection with overwork, in breaking down the constitution. Such cases are not necessary to show the injurious effect of constant labor at long

hours, especially under unfavorable conditions. There may be serious evils from constant and exhausting labor that do not show themselves in any positive, clearly defined disease; while, nevertheless, the vital forces of the whole man, physical and mental, are greatly impaired; reducing not only his power of work, but of the true enjoyment and improvement of his faculties as a man. Dr. Jarvis, in the letter from which we have quoted, after giving his objections to fixing the hours of labor by statute, thus expresses his interest in the general question: —

"Yet, although I am unwilling to see any law regulating the hours of labor, I am very glad that this matter is now agitated. The subject is of immense importance to the workmen. They should not overwork. They should not confine themselves to long sedentary occupation, or close and hot shops. The sedentary workman should shorten his quiet labor as much as the man whose exertion is violent. The effects of all the occupations, their demands on the strength, their effects on the physical constitution, their exposures and their relations to means of support and prosperity should all be studied and weighed by the laborer, the employer, the political economist and by the government, to see that every man shall enjoy the longest life and contribute by his labor, the largest amount to his own estate and to the Commonwealth."

In another note he adds,—

"Every man has a certain amount of constitutional force. This is his vital capital, which must not be diminished. Out of this comes daily a certain and definite amount of available force, which he may expend in labor of muscle or brain, without drawing on his vital capital. He may and he should work every day and expend so much force and no more, that he shall awake the next morning and every succeeding morning until he shall be threescore and ten, and find in himself the same amount of available force, the same vital income, the same power to do his ordinary day's work, and again lay down at night with his capital of life, his constitutional force unimpaired.

"These are principles that should be put into the mind and heart of every man, and more than all others into the mind of the laborer, whose whole capital is in his own frame, and which he wants to preserve for himself and his family to a good old age."

Judging by this standard there can be no doubt of the serious injury often resulting from overwork, even when no palpable evidence appears.

Letters bearing upon this point have been received from two of the physicians of Lawrence, Dr. Tewksbury and Dr. Sargent, both having had many years' experience, in which they speak of the evil effects of overwork, and express their earnest hope that the hours of labor in the mills may be reduced.

Hasty Meals.

Closely linked with the evil of long hours for labor, is that of too short a time for meals, especially the dinner, of which Dr. Sargent speaks as follows:—

"Another feature allow me to mention, and one that has often pained me for a long time, and that is the short time the operatives are allowed for dinner,—only thirty-five or forty minutes being allowed for them for that purpose. Many of them are obliged to travel half a mile or more, 'through summer's heat and winter's cold,' swallow their food in haste, half masticated, and hasten back with all speed, in order to prevent being locked out. This hasty manner of swallowing the food, and want of a few minutes' rest after, is prolific in causing dispepsia with all its concomitant diseases, which often end in consumption and death. I think an hour, at least, should be allowed."

This evil of hasty meals was brought before the National Sanitary Convention, held in Boston in 1860, by a member of our Commission, Mr. Snelling, who, after speaking of a conversation he had just held with an intelligent mechanic, who urged with great earnestness the need of more time for the dinner hour, offered the following Resolution:—

"*Resolved*, That this Convention earnestly recommend to master mechanics to adopt such a division of the hours of labor, for those in their employ, as will allow of an hour and a half, instead of an hour, as is now customary, for the midday meal."

This Resolution was advocated by the mover on the ground, that that half hour, after meals, would be a reservoir of strength; that the laws of our organization are immutable; and that we have no alternative but to conform to them if we would enjoy health.

The Resolution was instantly seconded and earnestly supported by the venerable Dr. Alexander H. Stevens, of New

York, the acknowledged head of the Convention. It was heartily advocated also by Dr. Jewell, of Philadelphia, and Dr. Griscom, of New York, both of them distinguished physicians and sanitarians. The latter gentleman said, that he regarded the question as of too great importance to be dismissed by the Convention by the simple adoption of Mr. Snelling's Resolution, and therefore introduced the following in addition:—

"*Resolved*, That this Resolution be referred to a special committee, of whom the mover shall be chairman, to report to the next convention, *in extenso*, why it should be adopted."

Such action by a *National Sanitary Convention*, embracing men of the highest medical authority from various parts of the country, indicates the importance attached to the subject of the Resolutions by those supposed to be best fitted to judge of what is demanded by the laws of health, and the proper *sanitary* regulations of labor.

Man cannot escape the penalty of a violation of the laws of his organization. All his vital powers are dependent on a proper assimilation of the food which nourishes him; and whatever retards this, or impairs the digestive functions, so far reduces the capacity for labor; showing that it is plainly for the interest of the employer, as well as the employed, to give suitable time for this important business of eating, upon which all the vital powers depend.

The Evils of Overwork not all Physical.

We introduce the following testimony, as showing that the evils of overwork are not merely physical.

The Rev. C. M. Cordley, pastor of Central Congregational Church, Lawrence, writes:—

"It is my conviction that a reduction of the hours of labor in our mills would be a great blessing to the workingmen, and is especially needed by the women and children. This conviction is founded on observation, and a somewhat intimate acquaintance, as pastor of a church with its members, most of whom are laboring in the mills. I have no hesitation in saying that I think them overworked, and, in many cases, jaded and worn. The *weariness and exhaustion resulting, is one of the*

chief obstacles which, as ministers of religion, we find in the work of ministering to our congregations. And I give my most earnest petition, with others, that some relief may be granted; that, not only shorter hours each day, but also that Saturday afternoon, be given for purposes of recreation; *that working men and women may be less tempted to turn the Sabbath into a holiday, and lose altogether the teachings and influence of religion.*"

Rev. C. E. Fisher, of the same city, pastor of the Low Street Church, also adds,—"I sincerely concur in the sentiments expressed by Rev. C. M. Cordley."

We introduce here an extract from an admirable letter from Dr. John C. Bartlett, of Chelmsford, showing that even farming districts do not escape the danger of overwork. After speaking of the necessity of a stringent law to protect children from overwork, and the vast importance of laying the foundation in youth of a healthy and robust manhood, he says:—

"When I commenced the practice of medicine in Chelmsford, thirty-four years ago, every farmer commenced his labor as early in the morning as he could distinguish objects by the morning twilight, and labored hard, with no intermission except to eat, (which did not consume one hour in the day,) as long as the daylight enabled him to see anything. The consequence of this was, that he must retire to rest as soon as the day's work was done, and the mind was of course left untrained and barren of every idea which did not relate to work. No wonder that the farmers as a class were brutally ignorant, or that their sons even now run away from the farm as from a pestilence. At the period to which I have alluded, a great many men not much above fifty, (always farmers,) would be seen in every farming town hobbling on crutches, or moving stifly about their labor, as though every motion caused them intense pain. Careful investigation of these cases convinced me that they were the result of excessive use of the muscular system, and were the direct consequence of too much labor. Most farmers at the present day labor fewer hours and less severely, in consequence of the introduction of machinery in their business, and consequently such cases as those above mentioned have almost disappeared.

* * * * * *

Such is now the desire for general reading and information that, if you can devise any means by which the farmer may be able to reduce his period of labor, you will do more for his solid education than all the agricultural colleges in the world."

Time Needed for something beside Work.

The foregoing letters show, what all may know from experience or observation, that an overtasked body is not in a condition for mental, any more than for physical labor. All work is, in a measure, brain work; and although some kinds of manual labor exercise the brain much less than others, still the mind sympathizes with the body, and is in no condition for work when the whole system is jaded and worn.

We know there is now and then one with a remarkable supply of vital forces, who can work all day, and still have enough reserved power to trim the lamp of study for the evening. But these are exceptional cases. The great mass of working-men have not this power. If they are to become men, mentally as well as physically, time must be given for mental improvement. We are aware of the objection always urged, that our great danger is from idleness rather than overwork, and there is much force in this. But the idlers from whom society has most to fear, though often found among the working classes, are not of them. They are not men who work eight hours instead of ten or eleven, but men who do not work at all. Pickpockets, burglars, thieves, garroters and the like, are seldom of the working classes, and yet there are multitudes of people who seem to see nothing but an increase of crime as the result of reducing the hours of labor an hour or two in a day. There is some cause, perhaps, for such a fear, but it may be carried too far. The dangerous classes are those who will have as little as possible to do with honest toil.

"Society," says Edward Livingston, "is formed of two divisions, those who by their industry or property provide subsistence for themselves and their families, and those who do not. The latter must, of necessity, draw their support from the former. This class includes those who, under the name of vagrants and able-bodied beggars, are placed in society on the verge between vice and crime; * * * abounding in large cities, they are the hotbeds on which idleness and profligacy are forced into crime."

It is from this class, mainly, that dangerous criminals are drawn, and it is possible that this class may be temporarily increased by a reduction of the hours of labor, especially if the change should be sudden. We do not expect that all will use

the time saved from labor in study, or that all will make a wise use of it. We have no idea of any magic change to be wrought, in the tastes or habits of the workingmen, by a reduction of hours. Each will spend his leisure as he likes, just as those do who can command all their time. Some will spend it foolishly —some wickedly. But others, we believe many others, and an increasing number, would spend the time profitably, in healthy recreation or home duties, cultivating the little patch of ground, repairing or adorning the house, playing with the children, providing domestic comforts and conveniences, reading the papers, keeping informed in national affairs, so as to vote intelligently at the next election; and a few of higher tastes reading more substantial books of science, art, history or religion. It is manifestly unjust that those who would employ their leisure hours wisely should be denied the privilege of having leisure hours, because others would abuse them.

Our theory of education, as something not for the few, but the whole people, demands that the working man should have time to carry on what the common school begins. Having been taught to read in our schools, and furnished with books in our public libraries, he needs now *time* to use them, if he have the disposition. We know it is said that all our men of mark *make* time. They are men of long hours. It is true. Such men need no time-table. They are the masters of all their hours, and they use them without stint. But these are always exceptional men; men of mark by affluence of natural endowment. But the mass of men are not, and cannot be, men of mark. Distinction from its nature is the privilege only of the few. But all have the capacity of improvement, all may rise, and it is because we would facilitate this rising of the masses into a true and noble manhood, that we favor this movement for a reduction of the hours of labor.

Men in mercantile or other pursuits, masters of their business and their time, may attend to their respective callings ten or twelve hours in the day, or more, without injury. They are on and off, can run out of office or counting room just when they wish, walk on 'change, meet friends, making business itself a recreation, while the hours run smoothly on in grooves of interest, oiled by the expectation of profit corresponding to fidelity of service. Such men are apt to say, quite complacently, "I think

the workmen should not complain of ten or eleven hours; I work more than that." True, but work so diversified; linking every extra hour with the hope of extra gains, is a very different thing from solid, monotonous toil for a fixed number of hours, for a fixed compensation. True, if the laborer be a *workman*, and takes a workman's pride in his work, it is relieved of much of its monotony, and becomes, in a measure, educational in itself; but only slightly so, as compared with the business of the merchant, lawyer or physician, that brings so large a class of faculties into play, and stimulates them all by increasing the compensation in proportion to the work done.

We agree with the happy statement of one of the principal advocates of an eight-hour law, "Every man should have one *vocation*, and as many *avocations* as possible."

We think there is reason in the arguments of the workingmen for a reduction on account of the extent and perfection of

Labor-Saving Machinery.

This phrase, at present, is rather a prophecy than a fact, since the introduction of such machinery, thus far, has served only, or mainly, to increase the productive power of man, without essentially relieving his toil. They are labor-*helping*, not labor-*saving* machines. We think the time has come for the workmen to reap some further benefit from these wonderful inventions, not only in the multiplication of his producing power, but in the reduction of his hours of toil. When one man at a machine can spin as much cotton in a day as could be spun by *four hundred* of the best spinners, when Arkwright took out his first patent, less than a hundred years ago; when, in converting grain into flour, one man will do the work it formerly required one hundred and fifty men to accomplish; when, in some departments of labor, as in the processes for producing iron, machinery has been steadily multiplying power a hundred fold each century for six hundred years, so that one man can now produce, in a given time, what it took six hundred to produce six hundred years ago; when, through scientific discoveries and appliances, processes are so reduced in time, that sugar may be refined in as many days as it once took weeks; and backing mirrors with an amalgam of mercury and tin, which once took six weeks, is now done in forty minutes;

when the producing power of man is so multiplied, and what was once the work of months, compressed into days or hours, we think it is reasonable for the workmen to ask that some of the benefits of this shortening process of science may be felt in shortening his hours of labor, as well as in cheapening what he buys; that this machinery, the boast of our inventive age, should become *labor-saving* in fact as well as name; that some of the hours now given to toil may be *saved*, to increase his productive power, not as a machine, merely, but as a *man*.

We favor a reasonable reduction of hours, also, on the ground that

WHATEVER LIFTS THE WORKMAN ELEVATES WORK.

We believe in the "dignity of labor," but we do not believe in the dignity of drudgery. We do not wonder that the working-men regard all abstract glorification of work that forgets the workmen, as eloquence wasted. The character of work depends on the character of the workman. You never can make labor honorable under a system of slavery; the slave makes work slavish. Degrade the man, and you degrade his work. Elevate the man, and you elevate his work. The different estimates of labor, North and South, come from this difference in the laborers. If the South is to be saved from its menial associations with work, it must be by the introduction of free and intelligent workmen. What a man is, gives character to what he does. The more that can be done, therefore, to increase the intelligence, and raise the general character of the working classes, the more will work itself be lifted out of drudgery into a place of honor, of which no true man need be ashamed. We believe that shorter hours would give a zest and interest to work which would help in changing it from a necessity to a pleasure, and so make labor more attractive as well as more honorable. Many, in all departments of labor, are now mere drudges, because they give themselves no time for anything but to drudge. That some do this from choice, or habit, does not change the fact. Labor is, in itself, too good a thing; it plays too important a part in human affairs; is too closely linked, not only with the necessaries and comforts, but the luxuries and refinements of life; with the wealth and welfare of individuals and communities; it is of too great

importance in developing national resources, and national character, and national strength and power, to be abused and degraded. While we treat it as a curse, it will curse us. When we recognize and use it as a blessing, it will bless us. We rejoice, therefore, in all that tends to strip from labor the filthy rags of drudgery that slavery and ignorance have flung over her fair form, and that helps to clothe her in an attractive garb, plain and strong, suited to her every day vocation of ministering to human want. Make labor honorable, and you win the idlers into the ranks of the workers; you create a love of work that makes it go with a will; you wake an honest pride in work, an ambition to do it well, to perfect one's self in the art. If less work be done in eight hours than in ten, it ought to be better done, and the greater constancy of labor, together with its greater attractions, would, it is reasonable to believe, compensate for the reduction of hours.

How to Effect a Reduction of Hours.

The Commission believe that the change desired can be better brought about by workingmen outside the State House, than by legislators inside. The reduction from the old long hour custom, to eleven in factories and ten in mechanical employments, has been made in our own State without legislative aid. We believe all needful changes can best be made in the same way. The eight hour rule is already adopted, to some extent, and seems to be gaining favor. Shipwrights, on old work, as we have stated, work less than eight hours a day. Mr. J. B. Ham, a member of the house, from East Boston, carried on the work of blacksmithing a part of the last year, upon the eight hour rule, satisfactorily confirming in practice the theory he had adopted from principle. A gutta percha company in the city of New York have voluntarily adopted the eight hour rule, and various associations in this city and in New York have adopted it prospectively, to take effect on the 10th of March. We hear of movements for the reduction of hours in cotton factories, and we have no doubt they will make changes, not by adopting the eight hour rule, but by a reasonable reduction. We are happy to justify this belief by the following extracts from the letter of William C. Chapin, Esq., agent of the Pacific Mills, Lawrence. Though entirely opposed to the eight hour law, he says:

"It is my impression that the conviction among the working people of our mills is so strongly inclined to favor ten hours of labor per day, that it may be wise to yield to it, notwithstanding my fears of the mal-appropriation of the time of a large proportion of our men, and regardless of the fact that when men who now earn eleven dollars per week for so many pounds of product, find that they can earn but ten dollars under the new regime, they will feel disappointed. * * * * *

"The loss of money to capitalists, to employers, will, doubtless, be seriously felt, and particularly so when any special cause appears for large profits. Yet this I consider a minor matter, if the physical and moral welfare of the operative classes demand a reduction of hours. I am not so sure of this as some are, but I am quite inclined to recommend a trial by this corporation.

"Please bear in mind that I refer wholly to sixty hours per week, and not forty-eight hours, as is now the call. The effect of such a reduction as this, i. e., the reduction of three-elevenths of our product, would be ruinous."

To make this intimation of change the more hopeful, we would state that the workmen representing the factory operatives of Lawrence, at the hearings, advocated the *ten* hour rule for the factories, believing that the change from *eleven* to *eight* would be too great for the interests, not only of the employer, but the employed. Whether we regard this as merely a coincidence of judgment, or the result of a mutual understanding, it is a hopeful sign of a reduction of hours satisfactory alike to the corporation and the operatives. The advantage of such mutual agreement over legislative enactments is seen at once in the maintenance of a kind feeling between the parties whose interests are wrongly supposed to be at variance, and in the freedom it gives for the proper adjustment of hours to the nature of the work, and the real interest of the workmen.

The progress made by the general movement, thus far, has been almost wholly independent of legislation. The introduction of the eight hour system in Australia, as given in the interesting statements of Mr. Tregurtha, seems to have been a voluntary concession on the part of employers to the urgent wish of the laborers. In his late address before the Social Science Conference, at Sheffield, Lord Brougham congratulated the working men of England on the beneficent changes secured there without legislation, and referred with praise to the great

co-operative movement going on in that country, the best illustration of which is at Rochdale, so well known as the constituency of Richard Cobden. In Germany and France this movement has also acquired great force, and is doing much for the improvement of the industrial classes. The French emperor, in a recent speech, found it politic to refer to this movement with approbation, and the political economists of Europe regard it with great favor. Though less known in the United States than it should be, we believe it could do much here for the objects desired by our working men.

What Legislation may do.

Still there is much that legislation may legitimately do to promote the interests of the working men. We have already spoken of the obligation of the State to all her children and minors, especially to those most needing protection. It is not only her right, but her imperative duty to secure to the children of the working men the proper means of mental and physical development; to regulate the system of apprenticeship, that the young may be properly instructed in their chosen vocation, and work saved from deterioration; and to care for those who, through infirmity or sickness, or misfortune of any kind, are unable to care for themselves.

The annual reports of the Board of State Charities show the generous provision made by the Commonwealth for the last named class. But in regard to pauperism, an ounce of prevention is worth pounds of cure. Hence it is both the right and the duty of government to use every available method of preventing pauperism, by institutions which tend to promote habits of economy and thought on the part of people of small means. Laboring men and their families in civilized society need, and must have recreation. The State can easily provide that they shall have the best at the lowest price. It is not extravagant to suppose, in a community like this, that five per cent. of the wages of laborers, at least, goes for recreations or amusements of one kind or another. If the State can, by providing pleasure grounds, menageries, botanic gardens, etc., make the money paid for recreation go five times as far, this is equivalent to raising wages four per cent. If it can found institutions for savings, which are secure as the State itself, and yield deposit-

ors the same ratio of profit as the rich secure on their larger sums, it has done far more than merely to raise wages. It has given every laborer who can earn any more than a subsistence, the opportunity to become a capitalist, and be his own legislator of hours of labor.

Legislation may also lay such checks as it may deem proper upon the tendency to an aristocracy of wealth, which is always damaging to the true interests of the industrial classes. In what we have said of the importance to the laborer as well as the capitalist of leaving capital free as labor itself, that so industrial investments, on which labor depends, may be encouraged, we would not be understood as objecting to wholesome regulations imposed on overgrown wealth, and that tendency towards monopoly which wealth exhibits, even in the presence of the freest competition. Money is a great power,—a power, too, easily wielded and rapidly effecting its objects, while the checks imposed by popular suffrage and democratic institutions work more slowly and sometimes defeat themselves. We would favor, therefore, a policy which would discourage every species of monopoly, and which would impose on excessive wealth such burdens for the support of the government, as its natural privileges make just and equitable. The rich man's luxuries should pay heavier tribute than the poor man's salt.

The legislature may render aid also to the industrial interests of the country, by making some suitable and permanent provision for the supply of reliable statistics in regard to the "condition and wants of the industrial classes." The Commission have already stated the difficulty of obtaining such statistics. We have by law annual returns from railroads, insurance companies, almshouses, prisons, etc., but it is only every five, or every ten years, that we get returns of industrial statistics, and these not always in such a form as to throw light on the questions of labor. We learn, for example, from the industrial statistics of 1865, how many hands are employed on each of the branches of industry; how many of these are males and how many are females; but we do not learn how many are minors; how many are below the age of twelve; how many hours they are employed; what is their rate of wages; whether they live in their own families or in boarding-houses; and, indeed, scarcely any of the facts necessary to an

investigation of the condition of the laborers. We think such statistics should be collected annually; and we would recommend, that a law for their collection be passed, and the duty of arranging them be assigned either to the secretary of the Commonwealth, or to the secretary of the Board of Charities, or to some new officer, who should have charge of the general statistics of Massachusetts. Such an officer, if furnished with the necessary means, could keep the legislature and the people informed of the material condition of the State with far more precision than is now done, and especially, could attend to the much neglected statistics of Labor.

What Working Men may do for Themselves.

But after legislation has done its utmost, the great work of elevating labor and laborers must devolve upon the working men themselves. Statutes have their province and use; but they cannot legislate idleness out of a man, nor industry into him. They can regulate apprenticeship, but cannot make workmen; can provide schools, but cannot make scholars; can furnish libraries, but not the love of reading; can establish institutions of savings, but cannot make the deposits; can open pleasure grounds, botanic gardens, museums of nature and art, and provide holidays for their enjoyment, but cannot direct whether those holidays shall be spent in elevating and instructive pleasures, or in vicious and corrupting indulgences; can give the franchise, but cannot direct the vote; can open the way from the bobbin room of a factory to the gubernatorial chair; from the shoemaker's bench to the national senate chamber; from flat-boat and tailor shop to the highest office in "the best government in the world," but can put no one on the track, or give any qualification for any office, trust, or responsibility.

Never was there a more glorious opportunity opened to the working men of any country, than of ours; but opportunity alone is not all that is needed; it is only as the opportunity is seized and used, wisely and manfully, by the working men themselves, that they can rise to the position of useful and honorable citizenship,—in itself higher than office,—or reach that goal of a true and noble manhood, that constitutes the only order of nobility recognized by the genius and spirit of our National Government.

Let the great body of working men prove, by temperate and industrious habits, by ambition in work and in workmanship, by the practice of that economy that will help them to become their own capitalists, by co-operative labor securing to each workman a share in the profits of his work, by associations for mutual *good* as well as mutual gain,—let them prove thus, by logic that no sophistry can refute or evade, that working men are bent on elevating labor by the elevation of themselves, and the wide-spread distrust of the proper use of leisure hours will speedily disappear. The workmen will take the honorable position that belongs to them; they will have no need to ask of any one how many or how few hours they shall labor; for they will be masters of their own time and their own terms, and increase or reduce hours of labor as the real interests of each and all may require—convincing capitalists by the only unanswerable arguments,—*intelligent and high-minded workmen*,—that capital is as dependent on labor, as labor upon capital; and, that it is only as both work together in harmony, that the industrial interests of the country are most truly promoted, and the greatest good of all secured.

Conclusion.

It may be well for convenience of reference to bring together, in closing, the three distinct recommendations which the Commission have ventured to make to your honorable body:—

1. That a change be made in the statutes concerning the schooling and work of children in manufacturing districts, so as to give them twice the amount of schooling now required, or by adopting in full what is known as the "half-time system."

2. That an inspector, or inspectors, be appointed to attend to the enforcement of these laws, and also, to look after the children put to apprenticeship, or otherwise bound to service by the State, to see that they are properly cared for according to the terms of indentures.

3. That provision be made for the annual collection of reliable statistics, in regard to the condition, prospects, and wants of the industrial classes.

Other suggestions made under the head of "What Legislation may do," need not be recapitulated, as they are suggestions rather than recommendations.

In conclusion, we would say, that the subject has grown upon us in interest and importance. We have not had the time, if we had the ability, to treat it as it deserves. Though the Report has been extended beyond what may be regarded as reasonable limits, we have left many things unsaid, and treated quite inadequately many of the topics we have introduced. But we have done what we could. We should have been glad, had time and space allowed, to give a more detailed account of the hearings; but this may be found in the reports already mentioned, which, together with our correspondence from working men and others, we herewith submit for your examination and preservation, in such form as may be thought best.

We take satisfaction in recording our testimony to the ability with which the cause of the working men was advocated, not only by professional men friendly to the movement, but by some of the working men themselves. It was a cheering prophecy that will hasten its own fulfilment. It is plain, that the industrial interests of the country are vital interests; that the cause of the laborer is the cause of all. We shall rise or sink, in national prosperity and true greatness, as labor is elevated or depressed. The great problem given us to solve is, the elevation of work to its rightful place of power, by the elevation of the workmen to intelligent and Christian manhood. In this solution the State may aid, but only the working men themselves can *demonstrate* the problem.

Respectfully submitted, by

WILLIAM P. TILDEN,
HENRY I. BOWDITCH,
F. B. SANBORN,
ELIZUR WRIGHT,
GEO. H. SNELLING,

Commissioners.

APPENDIX

TO THE

LABOR COMMISSION'S REPORT.

In this Appendix we propose to give some of the papers referred to in the Report, together with an abstract of the information furnished us by letter and otherwise.

The following is the Circular issued by the Commission, early in October. The substance of it was copied into newspapers circulating in all parts of the Commonwealth :—

[CIRCULAR.]

COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS.

12 STATE HOUSE.

BOSTON, October, 1865.

Dear Sir,—The Commissioners on the Hours of Labor, appointed by the governor, under the Resolve, chapter 62, of the general court for the year 1865, are desirous of collecting information relating to the subject. For this purpose, a hearing will be held at the State House on which you are hereby invited to attend. If, however, your convenience will not allow you to be present at that time, will you favor the Commission with information, by letter, in regard to the following points, if within your knowledge ?

1. The number of hours daily required of the laborer in the different occupations pursued in your vicinity, with the reason of the difference in hours, if any exists.

2. The employment of children at in-door occupations, and whether they are kept out of school by their parents or employers, in consequence of their work ; the rate of wages paid them, as compared with adults

and any other particulars which may occur to you concerning the subject.

3. The occupation and wages of women as compared with those of men; and particularly the wages and condition of that large class of female laborers, called needle-women.

4. The *actual* results of overwork in any occupation on the health of mind or body, and the duration of life among laborers.

5. The means in your vicinity for laborers to use profitably the time gained by any reduction in the hours of labor, and whether such a reduction would tend to increase vice and crime.

6. The effect of a reduction on business, on the investments of capitalists, and the price of commodities; and whether it would lead in most cases to special contracts with the laborer, or the custom of working by the piece.

If you can answer any of these questions, and not the whole, it will be regarded as a favor for you to give us information on so many points as you can, or any others relating to this subject, which have not here been stated.

WILLIAM P. TILDEN,
HENRY I. BOWDITCH,
F. B. SANBORN,
ELIZUR WRIGHT,
GEO. H. SNELLING,
Commissioners.

The number of letters and the locality of the writers, received in answer to the above circular, will appear from the following schedule:—

SCHEDULE I.

Number, locality and occupation of persons sending letters to the Labor Commission.

COUNTIES RECEIVED FROM.	Mill Owners or Agents.	Physicians.	Farmers.	Working men.	Miscellaneous.	Total number of letters.
Barnstable,	–	1	1	–	–	2
Berkshire,	1	1	–	–	1	3
Bristol,	1	–	–	1	4	6
Dukes,	–	–	–	–	–	–
Essex,	3	6	–	–	2	11
Franklin,	–	–	–	–	–	–
Hampden,	3	–	–	–	–	3
Hampshire,	1	1	–	–	–	2
Middlesex,	5	7	–	2	4	18
Nantucket,	–	–	–	–	–	–
Norfolk,	–	4	–	–	2	6
Plymouth,	1	1	–	–	–	2
Suffolk,	5	2	–	6	4	17
Worcester,	–	2	–	–	2	4
Unknown,	–	–	–	–	2	2
Totals,	20	25	1	9	21	76

Schedule II. gives a general view of those letters which furnished statistical replies to the questions of the Circular, and Schedule III. of those not containing statistics, together with a few of those in Schedule II.

SCHEDULE II.

Statistics in Letters received by the Commission on Hours of Labor.

[The numerals heading the columns refer to the questions of the Circular.]

	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.
(1.) Boston. . .	– –	– –	– –	– –	No means for profitable use of time, except in their families.	Agitation of this question has already led to contracts, so that reduction will have no effect on prices or investments.
(2.) Boston. (Glass Co.)	10 hours. . .	Employ boys from 14 to 21; little time for school; wages $3 to $8 per week.	Girls better educated when they come in; have evening schools; wages $4 to $8 a week.	No injurious overwork.	Good means for improvement; would, with most, tend to vice and crime.	Would lead to special contracts and work by piece; working by piece tends to produce inferior work.
(3.) Boston. . .	10 hours. . .	Boys from 14 to 17 years; regular pay small; $100 if they serve out time.	No women.	No injurious overwork.	Good means for improvement; think would not be made use of.	Would be injurious to capital and to labor; children might need protection; men can take care of themselves.
(4.) Boston. . .	11 hours. . .	Children employed full time; parents like to evade the school law; wages, ⅓ to ⅔.	Wages of women ⅔ that of men; earn $1 to $1.50 a day; board $2.50 per week.	Health of operatives compares favorably with that of any other class.	Only a part would be benefited by reduction of time.	See abstract, (*d.*)
(5.) Boston. . .	10 hours. . .	No children.	No women.	Athletic and healthy; able and willing to work ten hours.	Would tend to vice and crime.	Would lessen the profits of capital; transfer business to competing factories in other States.
Bridgewater. . .	10 hours. . .	– –	Domestics, $1.50 to $3 per week; seamstresses, $1 a day; makers of fancy goods, 40 to 50 cents per day.	No involuntary overwork.	Could use spare time in gardening, study, recreation, etc.; reduction of time would make no difference.	If the law became general in the States, would not affect capital or capitalists; at the same wages, laborers would realize less than now.

Brookline. . . .	10 hours. . .	No children.	Washwomen, $1 per day; needlewomen, $1 per day.	No involuntary overwork.	Library for such as can read; do not think it would tend to vice and crime.	Investments and prices not materially changed; special contracts would result.
Charlestown. . .	10 hours. . .	– –	Wages of women very low.	Much injury from overwork before the adoption of the 10 hour rule.	Do not think would tend to vice and crime.	Would give as great returns to capitalists, and increase the products of labor.
(1.) Chelmsford. .	10 hrs.; farmers more.	Not employed to any extent.	– –	No involuntary overwork.	Newspapers, books, etc.; would not tend to vice and crime.	– –
(2.) Chelmsford, (F'dry. Co.)	8 hours. . .	A few boys at some seasons; ½ wages.	No women employed.	Rarely do any overwork.	Would be good for some men, not for others.	Increased prices and special contracts would result; inexpedient to legislate in the matter.
Chicopee, (Dwight Co.)	11 h.; mechanics and machinists, 10.	3 months schooling; time, 8 or 10 hours; ½ wages.	Wages of women 90 per cent that of men.	Can give no results of overwork; regularity of work, diet, etc., conducive to health and longevity.	Good library; operatives little disposed to use it.	Will increase prices; reduce wages; lead to special contracts.
Concord. . . .	10 hours. . . .	No children kept from school who would not be kept under an 8 hour law.	Laboring women 8 or 10 cents per hour; needlewomen in families work by the hour.	No involuntary overwork.	No special means of mental culture, even if work people were disposed to use them.	Will lead to special contracts, etc., and be unfavorable to the laborer.
Fairhaven. . . .	10 hours. . .	Few children kept from school; half wages.	Women employed in photograph rooms, in shops, and at sewing; wages ⅓ that of men.	Women injured by overwork or want of exercise.	Might spend extra time in gardening; would not tend to vice and crime.	Would lead to special contracts.
(1.) Fall River, (Massasoit Mill.)	11 hours. . .	Many children empoyed at ¼ to ½ wages; kept from school to a limited extent.	Women employed; when brought into competition with men earn nearly as much.	No cases of overwork.	Good facilities for improvement; work people little disposed to use them.	Would increase prices, and also increase the present custom of working by the piece.

SCHEDULE II.—*Statistics in Letters, &c.*—Continued.

	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.
Hadley. . . .	10 hrs.; farmers more.	Some Irish children make palm leaf hats; wages, ⅓ to ½.	Washerwomen get ¾ men's wages; domestics, ½ to ½ men's wages; needlewomen, ½ to ¾ men's wages.	More injury from needless exposure than from overwork; average of life fair.	Do not see any benefit from reduction of time.	Would lead to special contracts.
Holyoke, (Paper Co.)	10 and 12 hrs.; women, 7 to 8; Saturdays, 8. .	Employ a few boys; 3 months schooling; wages ¼ that of adults.	Women's wages, 75 cents to $1.50; ½ to ½ that of adults.	– –	A benefit to some, not to others.	Reduced wages or increased prices would result; great inconvenience to manufacturers.
Lancaster. . . .	11 hours. . .	A few children employed; 3 months schooling; wages in proportion to age.	Women sew pocket books; mostly by the piece; wages, 50 cts to 75 cts. a day. .	No involuntary overwork.	Good library; not much used by laboring people; would tend to vice and crime.	Would lead to increased prices and special contracts.
(1.) Lawrence, (Washington Mills.)	11 hours. . .	Children employed; 3 months schooling; wages high compared with adults.	Women work by the piece; earn $1 to $2 a day.	Health and duration of life compare favorably with other classes of day laborers.	Reduction of time not necessary to allow attending lectures, etc.; would tend to vice and crime.	Would lead to investments in neighboring States; to special contracts and reduced wages.
(2.) Lawrence, (Pacific Mills.)	11 hrs.; some of the hands a little less than 11 hrs.	Children work as many hours as adults; have light work; fair wages.	Women paid liberally; in some departments as much as men.	Health and duration of life compare favorably with other classes of day laborers.	A reading room and library; more time would lead too many into bad habits.	See abstract. (*c.*)
Lee, (Paper Co.). .	Men, 10 hours; women, 9 hrs.	No children under 16 years.	Women's wages ½ of men's; no needlewomen.	Can give no results of overwork; hands generally healthy.	No means of profitable use of time gained by reduction.	Would reduce wages and lead to special contracts.

(1.) Lowell, (Lowell Manufacturing Co.)	11 hours. . .	Children under 15; 3 months schooling; boys' wages, (Oct., 1865,) average 54¼ cents per day.	Girls' wages, (Oct., 1865,) 57¾ cents per day; board, $2.50 a week; women and girls average 96 cents per day.	Overwork in mills rare; health of operatives generally good.	Ample means for improvement; would tend to increase vice and crime.	Would reduce wages and lead to special contracts.
(2.) Lowell, (Baldwin Mills.)	11 hours. . .	Children under 15; 3 months schooling; wages ½ to ⅔ that of adults.	Women's wages 60 to 75 per cent. of men's; needlewomen work harder and earn less.	Thinks duration of life average.	– –	Would be unfavorable both to labor and to capital.
Malden. . . .	10 hours. . .	A few instances.	– –	– –	No means of improvement; would lead to vice and crime; village abounds in drinking places.	Would increase the practice of working by the piece.
New Bedford. . .	10 hours; mills, 11 hours.	Some children kept from school; often go into the mill very young.	Women's wages lower than men's; wages of needlewomen very small.	Overwork common among women and children.	Good facilities for improvement; would not tend to vice or crime.	Effect on investments very slight.
Newton. . . .	11 h.; on farms, variable.	Few children employed; wages ½ that of adults.	Many woman in mills; seamstresses get 75 cents a day; washerwomen, 10 cents per hour.	Little injury from overwork; much from needless exposure, etc.	No special means for improvement; would tend to idleness and vice.	Special contracts would result.
North Becket. . .	11 hours. . .	Many children employed and kept from school; wages ⅓ of adults.	Women's wages ½ of men's; few needlewomen.	– –	Would tend to increase vice and crime.	– –
Northampton. . .	Mills, 10 to 12; other, 10.	Many children employed; 3 months schooling; boys earn more than girls.	Wages of girls of 16, $5 a week; under that age, $1 to $3.	– –	Lyceums—laborers not disposed to use them.	Diminish products, increase prices, lead to special contracts.
Princeton. . . .	10½ hours. .	– –	– –	– –	– –	– –

SCHEDULE II.—*Statistics in Letters, &c.*—Concluded.

	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.
Salisbury, (Merrimac Hat Co.)	10 hours. . .	Some children employed; 3 months schooling.	Women's wages, (at sewing hats,) $1 per day.	Knows of no cases of overwork.	Books, papers, library, etc.; is in doubt as to the effect of reduction of time.	– –
Sharon. . . .	Mills, 11; mechanics, 10.	No children employed.	Women sew straw, (piece work.)	Knows of no cases of overwork.	No special means for improvement; would lead to increase of vice and crime.	Perhaps not affect investments; would lead to special contracts.
South Reading. . .	10 hours. . .	Few children kept from school; foreigners; wages ½ that of adults.	Women in shoe and rattan shops; wages, $5 to $10 a week; few needlewomen.	Few cases of serious overwork.	Abundant means for improvement; but believe reduction would increase vice and crime.	Would injure business in all its branches.
South Yarmouth. .	10 hrs.; farmers, more.	Boys from 12 to 14 years often go to sea; wages ½ that of adults.	Wages of women ½ that of men; needlewomen less than ½.	– –	Reduction of time would not increase vice and crime in the *country*.	Would affect no material change.
Stoneham. . . .	10 hours. . .	Few children employed.	Wages $7 to $7.50 when paid by day; by the piece, more.	– –	Library, lyceum, etc.; were hours of labor reduced, new agencies would come into operation for benefit of working classes.	Would be injurious to present interest of capitalists; lead to reduction of wages.
Sudbury. . . .	10 hrs.; farmers, various.	A few children in the mills; work 11 hours; some kept from school.	Wages of women compare favorably with men's wages.	– –	Public library; would lead to vice and crime.	Reduction would be unfavorable to business.
(1.) Taunton. . .	Mills, 11 hours; elsewhere, 10 h.	Few children employed; not very young; loss of schooling rare.	Many women in manufactories of different kinds; wages ⅓ to ⅔ that of men.	No serious results from overwork.	Public library, evening schools, etc.; would increase vice and crime.	Might not divert capital from its present channels; would increase prices and lead to special contracts.

Topsfield. . . .	10 or 11 hours. .	Not many children employed.	Women run sewing machines; piece work.	Few cases of overwork.	Reduction to a certain extent would not tend to increase vice and crime.	Would probably not much affect investments and prices.
Wales. . . .	Mills, 12 hs.; mechanics, 10 hs.	Children get 3 mos. schooling; wages in proportion to labor.	Women in mills; good wages.	No overwork.	– –	Would lead to piece work and to special contracts.
(1.) Waltham, (Watch Factory.)	10 hours. . .	A few boys; not very young; have probably had the required amount of schooling.	Women employed; work adapted to their strength, and very remunerative.	Health of workmen fully up to the standard in any department of life.	Ample means for improvement, but thinks they would be neglected.	Compulsory reduction would be injurious to business, unless piece work and special contracts made the law inoperative.
Walpole. . . .	Work by hour or piece.	Children sometimes employed and kept from school; wages ½ that of men.	Women's wages ⅔ that of men.	Health and duration of life compare favorably with that of any other class of laborers.	Laborers would not be benefited by the reduction.	Would have no effect on business; men already work by the hour and piece, and pay no attention to legislation.
Wareham. . . .	10 or 11 hours. .	Thinks children in mills are kept from school.	Domestics wages from 18 to 29½ cents a day; needlewomen 50 cts. to $1 a day.	– –	Sufficient means for improvement, but think vice and crime would be increased.	Would increase prices and lessen investments.
West Stockbridge. .	11 hours. . .	– –	– –	– –	Would increase vice and crime.	Would lead to special contracts.
Wilmington. . .	10 " . . .	Children seldom kept from school.	Wages of women ⅔ that of men; needlewomen well paid.	No involuntary overwork; duration of life fully average.	Would tend to vice and crime.	Would lead to special contracts and diminished wages.
Winchester. . .	Mechanics, 10 h.; farmers, longer.	Children seldom employed.	Dress-makers, $1 a day; needlewomen in proportion; washwomen 12 cents an hour.	No involuntary overwork.	Would not tend to morality or intelligence.	Would lead to special contracts and diminished wages.
Woburn. . . .	10 hours. . .	Children seldom employed.	Wages of women ⅓ that of men; needlewomen work by the piece, 11 or 13 hours daily.	– –	Library and lyceums; do not think reduction would be a benefit to most work people.	Would tend to advance prices; special contracts and working by the piece would also result.
Worcester. . . .	Mechanics, 10 h.; manufacturers, 11; clerks, 12.	– –	– –	– –	– –	– –

SCHEDULE III.

Abstracts of Letters on Hours of Labor not containing Statistics.

[The letters *a*, *b*, *c*, etc., refer to the file of letters received.]

From Manufacturers or Agents.

(*a.*) Desires to call attention to the labor of children in mills. Represents that, from eight years old and upwards, they work full time—rise at 4½ A. M., having 30 minutes for breakfast, 45 minutes at dinner, and leave work at 7 P. M.,—14½ hours. Thinks manufacterers in Massachusetts and in Rhode Island, pay little regard to the law respecting employment of children. Would be for the interest both of employer and employed, if the law were such that no minors (under 21,) or females were allowed to work in mills more than ten hours per day, with penalties to enforce the same. The intelligence of the community would be increased thereby.

Edw. Harris, *Woonsocket.*

(*b.*)* Remarks relate chiefly to mill operatives. They are almost entirely *foreign* or of *foreign descent.* They number from six (6) to seven (7) thousand. There is an average of one grog-shop to every (25) twenty-five persons of them. During the last four years, when the mills have been idle a considerable part of the time, and special schools, etc., were furnished by the authorities, but a small part of this class of laborers were willing to attend them.

Charles Durfee, *Agent Massasoit Mills, Fall River.*

(*c.*)* Thinks the eight hour movement was made in the hope of securing a reduction from eleven hours to ten hours. *Eight* hours would be tenaciously resisted by employers. Although children are confined many hours, their work is such as to give them much liberty. Does not know of any great desire on the part of the work people for shorter time, except that at dinner they should be allowed a full hour. Thinks they would desire the ten hour rule, but would be disappointed to find their wages proportionally reduced. A compulsory law would be unfavorable if not made general in the States,—a strong argument against legislative interference. Is not sure that the welfare of operatives requires a reduction to *ten* hours, but is willing to have it tried. The *eight* hour rule would be ruinous to capital.

W. C. Chapin, *Agent Pacific Mills, Lawrence.*

* Letters containing Statistics. See Table of Statistics.

(*d.*)* The fixed investment in a cotton mill is large. Competition, especially in this State, where the corporation system gives publicity to results of business, reduces the average profit to the lowest point at which capital can be induced to flow into business. It is therefore necessary that the largest possible product in proportion to the machinery should be obtained. A mill running eleven hours might make fair profits —running eight hours would lose money. A mill running only *eight* in this State, could not compete with mills in other States, or in England, running eleven hours. The effect would be to prevent building more mills here, to lessen the value of those now in existence, and to drive capital and labor elsewhere. Special contracts by the hour or job would to a certain extent remedy this. But all classes of work cannot be done by the job. Practically a limit of eight hours in one department running by the day, would be a limit upon others running by the job. Increased price of products and reduction of wages would follow. Is doubtful if a *compulsory* eight hour law would help the laborer *even if wages remained the same.* Desirable to limit hours of labor for children. Any law in regard to them should be *imperative.* Difficulty in enforcing a law respecting children. See no practical way of limiting their hours of labor. Were less hours required of them than of adults, it would prohibit their working in mills. Should not work in mills under the age of twelve or fourteen years. Certain classes of operatives who sometimes make less hours, and men in machine-shops, who work only *ten* hours, are not found to be more healthy, intelligent or thrifty, than the *eleven* hour hands. A fourth part of the operatives use the library—much light reading among the women. Time for dinner might be profitably lengthened. Seven-eighths of all employed could work by the piece. Population changes so constantly that it is not easy to ascertain the comparative duration of life. Writes of a *compulsory law* only,—any other would be entirely inoperative.

PATRICK T. JACKSON, *Boston.*

(*e.*)* Were the hours of labor reduced in this State *only*, manufacturers would leave the State. Were the reduction to be made general, do not see that it would affect investments or capitalists in any respect. Not so with the laborer. Reduce the hours of labor one-fifth, and retain the same wages per day as now, he would still realize only precisely four-fifths of what he now does by working ten hours. His day must be the measure of another man's. No legislation can make his receipts for *eight* hours more than four-fifths of what they would be for *ten* hours. The question should be one for the workman to decide on a fair understanding of its merits.

J. E. CARVER, *Agent So. Cotton Gin Co., Bridgewater.*

* Letters containing Statistics. See Table of Statistics.

(*f.*)* Employ about three hundred able-bodied men. Excepting about *twenty-five*, all work by contract. Some parts of the work exhaustive, but as a general thing all our men are able and willing to work *full ten hours* daily. A compulsory *eight hour* law would be considered oppressive by them, and they would go to other States, where there was no such restriction. A large portion of our workmen are French Canadians, who care little for mental improvement.

W. T. Eustis, *Pres. Douglas Axe Manuf'y Co.*

(*g.*)* In October, 1865, there were employed 453 males, at an average of $1.39 a day; 875 females at an average of 96 cents per day; 32 males under 15 years, 55¼ cents per day; 18 females under 15, 57¾ cents per day. Men boarding in company's houses pay $3.25 a week—women, $2.50 per week. Some years since there was a reduction of one hour per day in the working time of the mills in this city. Has failed to discover evidence of general improvement, which could be ascribed to reduction of working time. A manufacturer cannot pay as much *per hour* for eight or ten hours service per day as for eleven hours, and as the working time in manufacturing cities and towns, fixes, in a measure, the working time of those engaged in other pursuits, with the reduction of the wages of the laborer there would be an increase in the cost of living. Working by the piece is now customary with us to the extent that is practicable.

Samuel Fay, *Superintendent Lowell Manuf'g Co.*

From Physicians.

(*h.*) Is enabled to say from fifteen years' observation in a manufacturing community, that operatives in mills are overworked, showing its effects in a general decline of physical vigor. Many break down after five or six years' labor. A. J. French.

(*i.*) The long hour system, particularly night work, is prejudicial to young persons under eighteen, especially to young women.

M. Roberts, *Lawrence.*

(*j.*) Better let things remain as they are. Ten hours none too much for laborers or seamstresses; if the latter do not find time for exercise, it is their own fault. Laborers are not generally tired. The change would be better for the grog-shops. They (laborers) have no inclination for self-culture. When necessary to employ children, the public authorities should instruct them at suitable times.

J. B. S. Jackson, *Boston.*

* Letters containing Statistics. See Table of Statistics.

(*k.*) Has been a practising physician eighteen years in this city (Lawrence,) and been a close observer of the health and morals of operatives. Thinks long confinement in mills and insufficient time for meals, injurious, and that ten hours a day is better than eleven or twelve hours.

ISAAC TEWKSBURY, *Lawrence.*

(*l.*) A practising physician in Lawrence many years. Ten hours labor a day enough for strong men, too long for children and delicate women. Ten hours in a mill more injurious than twelve or fifteen hours at farm work. The short time allowed for dinner, (thirty-five or forty minutes,) a serious evil, as the operatives often have to walk some distance.

SENECA SARGENT, *Lawrence.*

(*m.*) Has been a practising physician many years. No hesitation in saying that mill work, long continued, is injurious to bodily and mental health, and materially shortens life, especially that of women and children. Would earnestly recommend reduction of labor in manufacturing establishments.

AARON ORDWAY, *Lawrence.*

(*n.*) An agricultural community. A few women and children work at home for manufacturers in other towns. No regard had to hours of labor stipulated by law, and none probably will be, should there be new legislation.

B. H. TRIPP, *Rutland.*

FROM WORKING MEN.

(*o.*) Believe that to 99 per cent. of laboring people *ten* hours labor is excessive. That since the adoption of the ten hour rule mechanics enjoy many more of the comforts of life than formerly, and further reduction would increase them still more. Laborers are too tired to read useful books. That the most enterprising and intelligent, both of laborers and capitalists, favor the reduction.

GEO. GAY, *Hopedale.*

(*p.*) In the city of Fall River are 2,390 operatives in shops and mills heated to 80 or 85 degrees, by steam. They work eleven hours a day. Many carry their dinner because they live so far off. Of these, 1,221 are females from 18 to 35 years of age. These walk 18 or 20 miles a day at their work; wages $6 to $9 a week. 518 men who have to walk daily 25 miles at their work; wages $9 to $12 a week. 652 minors, from 8 years to 14, wages $2.00 to $2.50 a week; kept from school. Most cannot read or write, as is the case with many adults. 70 men in dressing-rooms heated to 112 degrees, nine to ten hours a day, wages $2 to $3 a day. Difference in time because they cannot

stand the heat. Good facilities for improvement, night schools, etc. Operatives too tired to use them or care for them.

Short Time Committee of Fall River.

(*q.*) Desires the reduction of hours of labor in order that working people may have time to attend public worship on Sunday. Now they are so tired that they are compelled to take that day for rest.

D. N. SMITH, *Boston.*

(*r.*) Reduction of hours of labor would be a great benefit, would give opportunity for self-improvement and needed rest. That more and better work can be done in few hours when one is rested, than in many hours when one is tired. That female labor is excessive, and poorly paid, resulting in loss of health and life. That carvers and cabinet makers are unable to work after 40, and one-fourth are worn out at 33 years. That if a reduction were granted, one-half of the young would spend their free time in self-improvement. That at present it is better to work by the day than by the piece.

Carvers' and Cabinet Makers' Union, Boston.

(*s.*) In addition to testimony before the Commission.

W. A. WARNER, *Hatter, Boston.*

(*t.*) Mechanics, including time for meals, have to be on duty often times 13 hours in a day. Operatives in cotton mills 11¼ or 11½ hours besides meals. Many of these are children. Women are better paid here than in most communities, but needle-women are poorly paid. Thinks excessive labor common, and that it shortens many lives. Laborers would improve opportunities for self-culture. That the effect of reduction upon business would be good; would *popularize* labor, would not diminish the amount of production. Men would work by the day as now.

E. D. MOOR, *Waltham.*

(*u.*) Thinks the eight hour movement is being made a political one, and that *politicians* do not feel safe in opposing it. Does not believe that the physical or mental well-being of the laborer requires such a reduction. Asks what are the *results* of the *ten hour* rule. Believes the *eight* hour rule *impracticable*, as well as *uncalled* for. Laborers of all kinds would have to be hired by the hour. Better let the thing regulate itself.

[*No Signature.*]

MISCELLANEOUS.

(*v.*) Law of the State in regard to the working of children in mills not fully enforced in this city (Taunton.) School committee find difficulty in fully carrying it out. Parents make the plea of necessity, and

say, moreover, that when their children are in the mill, they know where they are; they are safer. If agents are peremptory in enforcing the rule in all cases, parents remove to places where they will be allowed to keep their children at work. E. MALTBY, *Taunton.*

(*w.*) Statement of W. Harris, that in 1857, while superintendent of a woollen mill in South Royalston, Mass., mill running twelve hours a day, they made more cloth than they could sell. The time of running was reduced (33 per cent.,) to eight hours, work by the piece; that at the end of the month it was found they had made as much cloth as before, and the pay roll remained the same.

Letter of L. B. WRIGHT, *Roxbury.*

(*x.*) The *real* point to be gained by those who petition for the eight hour rule is this: they are mechanics (of various cities) who have worked for government, either directly or indirectly, and have realized as much pay by overwork as by regular work (2½ hours being reckoned half a day.) *Reduction of regular time to eight hours will make ten hours a day and a half.* They do not intend to be prohibited working overtime, nor to obey the law, should that clause be added.

JOS. HOSMER, *Boston.*

(*y.*) Believes the change would be great benefit to all, especially to women and children. Weariness resulting from overwork is a great obstacle to religious instruction. Desires not only reduction in hours of labor, but that Saturday afternoon be given for recreation, in order that Sunday may not be used as a holiday.

C. M. CORDLEY, *Lawrence.*

(*z.*) Concurs in the above. C. E. FISHER, *Lawreuce.*

(*) Well to have a legal standard for hours of labor. Should be varied by laborers to suit their peculiar circumstances. (Proposes the form for such a law.) Important to offer to laborers some equivalent for the lost hours of work. Many would of themselves be unable to fill up profitably their spare time. (Proposes a law for the mutual benefit of employer and employed.)

F. W. SAWYER, *Boston.*

(*aa.*) One important question omitted by the Commissioners—Do intelligent working men have incomes large enough to support their families, meet public demands and lay up something for themselves in old age? Thinks they do not. Fixes the average income of capable, energetic working men at $400 or $450,—this not to include the four

years of war. That the reduction of hours of labor already accomplished, has been for the good of society. By lessening the hours of labor, business, instead of being checked in the short days of winter, tends to be equalized,—spread over the whole year. That heavy and unhealthy trades cannot long be restrained from themselves applying the remedy. Objections to this reform are superficial. That the length of the present working day deprives workmen of certain necessary advantages. It is of little use to cheapen books, if there is no time to read them. Want of leisure under more favorable conditions than the present, is a needless privation. The pecuniary loss to the workmen, from reduction of time, will be greatest at first, and be steadily diminished. That the estimated loss of production (20 per cent.,) is too great. Much of the loss would be made up by increased vigor and skill of the workman. There would be marked gain in the health and average duration of life. That this reform is needed on account of the military liabilities of men.

If the eight hour rule is impracticable in agricultural communities, then ten hours might be adopted for farm work and eight hours for mechanics, There is a unanimous desire on the part of working men that a paid Commission should be authorized by legislature, to consider thoroughly these questions.

Among other points for investigation might be named savings banks, to find out how large a part of the deposits remain any considerable time; whether these deposits are really the savings of working men and women; the condition of real estate held by working men as to mortgages, etc.; an inquiry into the rules and regulations of labor throughout the State; how far combinations for the purpose of regulating wages would be permitted. Believes that workmen have the right to enter into such combinations, though it would be an extreme measure. Complains of the narrowness and injustice of the law against strikes.

E. H. Rogers, *Chelsea.*

LETTERS FROM DR. EDWARD JARVIS.

[Cited on pages 26 and 36.]

DORCHESTER, Mass., Nov. 9, 1865.

GEORGE H. SNELLING, Esq., Boston:

My Dear Sir,—I regret that I was absent when you called to-day. I was glad to find your note in which you explained the object of your visit, and your wish for an explanation of an apparent discrepancy between the opinions I gave to Mr. Falls and to Dr. Bowditch. This is very easy, inasmuch as they were opinions on two different matters, and had no necessary connection with each other.

I stated to Mr. Falls that I required seven hours' daily work from these clerks on the mortality statistics.

I furthermore gave him the reason. This work of calculation, computation, and transfer, of analysis of statements of facts, breaking up their old connections and combining them in new connections and relations, requires to be done with absolute accuracy, and this can be accomplished only with the greatest mental discipline, with the intensest concentration, and long and severe attention. Very few employments impose such a strain on mental powers, and lay such a tax on the cerebral forces as this. This can, then, be done, surely and safely only when the brain and mind are vigorous.

When they become weary, concentration is more difficult, and mental action less certain.

I therefore measure my requisition of labor with the view of obtaining all their available power, in each day, without perilling its certainty, or impairing its force and effectiveness in any succeeding day.

Few, perhaps no other occupations, require this intensity of attention, or make such drafts on the cerebral forces. Almost all others allow change, relaxation and intervals of ease to the mental powers. In those, writers, clerks, &c., can work more hours in the day without weariness than they could here. The persons whom I now employ only seven hours a day (and think the interest of the service they are engaged in requires and will allow no more,) could act as book-keepers, attend stores, work in factories, do the household labor, nurse children more hours daily without impairing their forces, lessening the value of their exertions, or perilling their effectiveness in the days that shall follow, and would do so cheerfully if they were to engage in such occupations. It therefore seemed to me not well, not for the interest of the employed or of the employer, to establish any *general* regulation or law in respect

to the hours of labor,—certainly none based upon the experience and necessities of those requiring and of those giving the intensity of mental concentration that is needed in my present work.

It seems neither expedient nor just to establish any single measure of time to be applied to occupations that make such different drafts on the human forces. It would be neither kind nor wise to make any law to prevent those who now work here thirty-nine hours a week for thirty-three cents an hour from working seventy hours a week in any other employment that is half as exhaustive and half as well paid. I therefore told Dr. Bowditch that, as at present advised, I thought it not proper to interfere by any *general* law with the hours of labor.

I furthermore said to him that I thought that in most of the occupations requiring muscular action, men could work ten hours a day from twenty to sixty years of age without thereby impairing their health, or lessening that capital of life that would carry them through a good old age.

In this I had simply physical muscular exertion in view; for there are many other collateral conditions and influences to be considered in their relation to the continuance of health and the permanence of power. The severity or lightness of labor, the violence of exertion, as in wielding the sledge-hammer, lifting stone, or, on the other hand, tailoring, shoemaking, engraving, &c., the persistence or variableness of the exertions, employments that require the exercise of one set of muscles only, as in drilling rocks with the drill-bar, or of all the muscles of the body, as farming and gardening—all these have their influence in the expenditure and exhaustion of force, and on the continuance of the supply of strength and power to labor, and all should be considered in determining the hours that should be given to work.

The same discrimination should be applied to the other circumstances of labor—the exposures to the severity of the elements, to intense cold or intense heat, and to storms—also the supply of air. Those who work in small shops, in which the average is small, dangerously small for respiration of the occupants, can work, or ought to work, less than those who work in the free air abroad. The purity of the air as effected by the material worked upon, or the processes conducted, the lightness or darkness of the place, in some employments the effect of contact with the matter handled—all these have very important effect on the health and the continuance of labor.

The employments are manifold. The English census divides the people among somewhat more than 1,200 various occupations. These, with their circumstances, conditions and influences on health of the workman, and his duration of power, vary so much and so widely, that no rule of hours can be applied to them, no single system can be adopted

for the good of some, without being injurious to others, if all are required to conform to it. It would not then be well for the interests of labor or the laborers to adopt any law of the State or of society that would prevent any workman from so appropriating and using his powers of body or mind, his strength or his skill, in such a manner and to such an extent as he deems best to procure for himself and his family the largest amount of support and comfort.

Yet, although I am unwilling to see any law regulating the hours of labor, I am very glad that this matter is now agitated. The subject is of immense importance to the workmen. They should not overwork. They should not confine themselves to long sedentary occupation, or close and hot shops. The sedentary workman should shorten his quiet labor as much as the man whose exertion is violent. The effects of all the occupations, their demands on the strength, their effects on the physical constitution, their exposures, and their relations to means of support and prosperity, should all be studied and weighed by the laborer, the employer, the political economist and by the government, to see that every man shall enjoy the longest life, and contribute, by his labor, the largest amount to his own estate, and to the Commonwealth.

Truly, your friend,

EDWARD JARVIS.

DORCHESTER, Mass., 10th Nov., 1865.

GEORGE H. SNELLING, Esq., Boston:

My Dear Sir,—Although I wrote you a long letter last evening, I omitted to mention a slight matter in reference to Mr. Fall's visit. I did not say that any of my clerks had *overworked*, and were consequently unfit for the fullest and the clearest mental labor the next day.*

I said that, on examining their work in the morning before they came, I once found some mistakes in one. I asked her "if she had felt well the afternoon previous." She said, sorrowfully, "No, she had a headache, and that was the reason she had done no more. She struggled very hard, but could not make her calculations with the usual quickness and care." I said that I had discovered it otherwise, by the errors, and that if again she felt any illness, she should at once leave her work, walk abroad or go home. And moreover, if she felt fatigued at any time, she should do the same; for the brain, when in pain or

* Knowing the unprofitableness of overwork, I limited the hours to seven daily, and have not in any case exceeded them. If this prove too much, I shall diminish them.

wearied, could not command its action and work with precision, any more than the muscles; when we were foot-weary we walked with uncertain step, and when head-weary we write with less exactness.

I used these illustrations to the lady, and she profited by it, when again she had headache.

I think I used the same to Mr. Falls.

Moreover, I think I told him of my own occasional error in this matter of overwork. Once especially, when I wanted to do very much in a day, but worked at the expense of the next day and that after, the result was, that although I did two days' work in the first day, I accomplished less in the three days than I should if I had worked regularly and moderately.

This should be impressed on all employers and workmen, whether working for themselves or for others.

Every man has a certain amount of constitutional force. This is his vital capital which must not be diminished. Out of this comes daily a certain and definite amount of available force, which he may expend in labor of muscle or brain, without drawing on his vital capital. He may and he should work every day and expend so much force and no more, that he shall awake the next morning and every succeeding morning, until he shall be threescore and ten, and find in himself the same amount of available force, the same vital income, the same power to do his ordinary and healthy day's work, and again lay down at night, with his capital of life, his constitutional force unimpaired.

These are principles that should be put into the mind and heart of every man, and more than all others, into the mind of the laborer, whose whole capital is in his own frame, and which he wants to preserve for himself and his family to a good old age.

The application of these principles will be better left to the workman, to society, to intelligent discussion, to customs which shall be established and *amended with increase of thought and study of the human constitution, and of health*—to the common law, which, in these matters, will be better and more humane and just than any statute law.

Truly, your friend,

EDWARD JARVIS.

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